For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
QUAECUMQUE VERA

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

https://archive.org/details/mennonitesofalbe00sawa

Thesis
1964
#72

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE MENNONITES OF ALBERTA AND THEIR ASSIMILATION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

ARON SAWATZKY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PREFACE	iii
	INTRODUCTION	1
I	Early Immigration and Settlement, 1886-1913	21
II	World War I and its Implications for the Mennonites of Alberta, 1914-1922	62
III	The Coming of the Russländer, 1923-1929	83
IV	Developments in the Depression, 1930-1939	123
V	New Challenges Created by the War, 1939-1946	162
VI	Mennonitism during the Post-War Period, 1947-1960	196
	CONCLUSION	256
	APPENDICES	270
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	274

CHART

Fig. 1 Origin of the six Mennonite groups in Alberta 10a

MAPS

Map 1 Mennonite Settlements in Alberta prior to World War I 27a

Map 2 Mennonite Settlements in Alberta prior to World War II 141a

TABLES

Table I Immigration for the pre- and post-war years 95

Table II Number of British and non-British immigrants for the years 1909-1914 and 1924-1929 122

TABLE III Immigration figures for the years 1900 to 1939 130

TABLE IV No. of Russländer families who settled in isolation from Mennonite influence during the 1930's 140

TABLE V Relief contributions from Mennonite Churches in Western Canada 188

TABLE VI Income from farm produce sold by Mennonite farmers during 1941 195

TABLE VII Categories and distribution of immigrants by December 10, 1948 204

TABLE VIII Occupational Analysis of 400 jobholders in the Province of Alberta-1960 211

TABLE IX Occupational Analysis of 175 jobholders in a typical Mennonite family-1960 212

TABLE X Occupational Analysis of jobholders in Edmonton-1960 212

TABLE XI Occupational Analysis of jobholders in Calgary-1960 213

TABLE XII Occupational Analysis of jobholders in Lethbridge-1960 213

TABLE XIII	No. of persons of Mennonite Background in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge-1960	215
TABLE XIV	A Comparison of High School Achievements	219a
TABLE XV	Bible School attendance of Mennonite Young People	224
TABLE XVI	Religious schools attended by members of a typical Mennonite family-1960	225
TABLE XVII	Secular and Religious schools attended by Mennonites-1960	226
TABLE XVIII	Language used in the homes of a typical Mennonite family	230
TABLE XIX	Language preference among members of a typical Mennonite family	230
TABLE XX	Language used in General Conference Mennonite Sunday Schools	230
TABLE XXI	Language used in the Sunday Schools of various Mennonite groups	231
TABLE XXII	United Missionary Churches and Missions established from 1947-1960	234
TABLE XXIII	Family Worship and Bible Reading habits of Mennonite church members	247
TABLE XXIV	Distribution of Secular and Religious Periodicals among Mennonites in Coaldale area	248
TABLE XXV	Mixed marriages among Old Mennonites	249
TABLE XXVI	Mixed marriages among Mennonite Brethren, General Conference Mennonites based on a survey of 140 cases-1959	250
TABLE XXVII	Mixed marriages among members of a typical Mennonite family	251

PREFACE

An attempt to explain the nature of our society must take into account the cultures of millions of immigrants of different languages, religions and mores. Settlers, diverse in background, were brought together and heredity and environment interacted. New immigrant communities developed and in modified forms certain ancestral ways and loyalties disappeared, while others persisted predominantly because there was as yet no real Canadian culture. The relationships and changes experienced by one ethnic community were hardly those of another. Some sought to resist change in an attempt to maintain the "old", and others recognized the necessity of coming to terms with a new environment and a new status. Even within one social group, the approach to problems varied as did also the nature of adjustment. The life of a people is, of course, so indescribably intricate that completeness in the study of just one group, such as the Mennonites, is practically impossible.

The writer is deeply grateful to the many church leaders and teachers, public archivists and librarians, publishers of periodicals and newspapers, and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization for the assistance they have given. Sincere thanks are extended to the many necessarily anonymous persons who responded so readily to requests for information, often of a very personal nature.

INTRODUCTION

Some Mennonite leaders have contended that the Mennonites in North America have embraced secular society so fully because the environment has been so favorable. Those who hold this view declare that a hostile society such as the Mennonites faced in Europe is less to be feared than one that accepts a minority group and works indirectly to absorb it. The former, it is asserted, provokes migration whereas the latter ensures gradual assimilation.

Our purpose, therefore, is to determine what has happened to the Mennonites of Alberta since they first entered the province. We must ascertain how the environment in Canada and more particularly in Alberta affected them, in what ways they have responded to external influences, and how effective have been their endeavors to preserve their faith under new circumstances. It will be necessary, also, to investigate the attitudes of the various groups of Mennonites in Alberta and how these have affected their primary objective of maintaining the faith.

To understand these and related issues it becomes imperative first to review briefly the origin, religious views, and migrations of the Mennonites and the schisms among them.

The Mennonite church traces its origin to the Anabaptists[1]

---

1. For a discussion of the Reformation see:
Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the 16th Century, Boston, 1952.
Albert Hyma, Renaissance and Reformation, Grand Rapids, 1951.
Preserved Smith, The Age of the Reformation, New York, 1920.

who began as a small radical group which opposed the principle of a state-church as advocated by both Luther and Zwingli.[2] For the Anabaptists religion was a matter of the individual conscience. The Christian church was to be a pure, voluntary fellowship composed of those who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.[3]

Anabaptists taught that the church was a group of people with mutual interests and unity of purpose, a fellowship of believers who had been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and were bound together by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.[4] This concept of the church of Christ led to the practice of adult baptism[5] upon a personal profession of faith and proof of consecration. Baptism could obviously not be administered to infants who had no way of professing faith. The ceremony of baptism was considered as but a symbol of spiritual rebirth and commitment to discipleship, and as a rite of admission to God's visible church. Anabaptists taught that any grave sin committed after admission to the church would exclude a person from membership until full repentance and restitution were made. This gave rise to the use of the church ban, through which church mem-

---

2. For a comparison of Zwinglian and Anabaptist views see: Lydia Müller, "Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnten" Quellen und Forshungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, X X, Leipzig, 1938, p. 199ff, p. 249ff. The Complete Works of Menno Simons, Elkhart, Indiana, 1871, (Translated from Dutch edition of 1681), Vols. I and II, passim.

3. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 77

4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 171, p. 232; Vol. II, p. 183.

5. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 215

bership was publicly revoked for all those who because of their evil conduct had already ceased to belong to the church.[6]

Anabaptists taught that the state was instituted by God and required obedience on the part of its citizens. It was, however, believed to be an order outside the Christian church. Consequently, members of the Christian church must abstain completely from any form of military service, must refuse to do police service, to be magistrates or even to accept jury service.[7]

Anabaptist communities were congregational in organization. These congregations sometimes chose their ministers by lot from the rank and file, but more generally elected the minister by a majority vote. The puritanical simplicity of the Anabaptist religion was due in part to the uneducated ministry and the attempt to escape persecution by making their religious practices and meetings as inconspicuous as possible. The simplicity of life was to be manifested by outward appearance in dress and conduct and a separation from the "world".[8] By the term "world" Simons meant the mass of unbelievers.

Salvation and justification by faith were basic to the Anabaptist approach.[9] They stressed freedom of will,[10] individual responsibility for moral conduct, and the imitation of Christ.[11] In this respect they resembled the medieval ascetics and the Catholic

---

6. Simons, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 161f.

7. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 97, 31, 118, 185

8. Ibid., Vol. I p. 167, Vol. II, p. 248.

9. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 112, 82, 116, 170, 242, 443, 226, 318ff.

10. Ibid.,Vol. I p. 28.

11. Ibid.,Vol. I, p. 239-268, 283, 284; Vol. II, p. 121-137, 446.

reformers in the Netherlands, such as Thomas à Kempis.

According to the Anabaptists mankind was composed of two kingdoms, the good and the evil, the believing and the unbelieving, darkness and light.[12] This doctrine led to an emphasis on nonconformity to the "world" and made the church the central reality in the life of the community. The purpose was not to seek the betterment of the mass of unbelievers but to establish a "fellowship of believers" by winning converts who would turn their allegiance from the "world" to the church.[13]

Anabaptists always were fundamentalists in the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures.[14] While the interpretation of the Bible was an individual responsibility, illumination by the Holy Spirit was essential and presupposed.[15] This resulted in many contradictory interpretations. Which of these was to be upheld as divinely inspired has remained a problem of Anabaptist fundamentalism and has resulted in many divisions throughout the history of the church.

These Anabaptist doctrines spread rapidly because of persecutions. In or about 1525 Anabaptist refugees carried their beliefs to the German cantons of Switzerland and into Tyrol, Salz-

---

12. Simons, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 83, 95f; Vol. II, p. 409ff.

13. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 71, 96, 144; Vol. II, p. 110.

14. Schleitheim Confession of Faith. A translation of this Confession is to be found in:-John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, Scottdale, Pa., 1949, pp. 206-213.

15. Simons, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 82, 83; Vol. II, p. 309.

burg, and the Rhine Valley.[16] Some refugees spread Anabaptist views as far as Moravia where the earlier Hussite Movement had prepared the minds of men for the reception of Anabaptist beliefs. A number of Swiss and South German refugees brought Anabaptism to the Netherlands where it became the leading factor of the Reformation until the 1560's.[16]

In the Netherlands the Anabaptist refugees found one of their outstanding leaders in the person of Menno Simons.[17] He renounced his faith and Roman Catholic priesthood and joined an Anabaptist congregation in Leeuwarden.[18] He succeeded Obbe Philips as leader of the Anabaptists in the Netherlands. When the Catholic Counter Reformation under the Duke of Alba (1544-1572) revived the persecution of Protestants, Menno Simons and many of his followers fled to the more tolerant principalities of Northwest Germany. In subsequent years Menno Simons gave unity and direction to the leaderless mass of Anabaptist refugees in the Netherlands and Northern Germany.[19] These followers of Simons became known as Mennonites.

The severe persecutions in the German states prompted the first Mennonite migrations to America. Among those migrating were

---

16. Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen, Karlsruhe, Germany, 1955, p. 100ff.

17. John Horsch, Menno Simons, His Life, Labors, and Teachings, Scottdale, Pa., 1916.

18. John Horsch, "Prominent Co-Workers of Menno Simons", Christian Monitor, March, 1940, p. 69f.

19. Unruh, op. cit., p. 74ff.

the Amish and the Old Mennonites. In 1663 a Dutch Mennonite, Pieter Plockhoy, led the first party of Old Mennonites in a migration to America and established a colony on the Delaware River.[20] The first Amish settlers arrived in Pennsylvania in 1720 and not being able to fellowship with the Mennonites already there, settled in Berks and Chester counties. This group had originated in 1693 when Jacob Ammann and a number of followers left the main body of Swiss Anabaptists over a matter of discipline.[21]

Persecutions in the Netherlands drove many Mennonites into northwestern Germany and finally into the Danzig area. Here in the Vistula delta the Mennonite communities continued unmolested for nearly two centuries. Problems again arose when the population increased, land became difficult to acquire, and Mennonites were required to contribute toward the militarization of Prussia.[22]

Many of the Danzig and Prussian Mennonites, therefore, responded to the 1763 manifesto of Catherine II designed to lure farmers into the Russian Ukraine.[23] Here the Mennonites enjoyed such liberal concessions that they soon developed a fairly stable and almost self-governing "state" within a state. Their agricultural, industrial and social development exceeded that of the Russians.[24]

Then during the 1870's Alexander II embarked upon a Russian-

---

20. A. E. Bestor, Jr., Backwoods Utopias, Philadelphia, 1950, p.27.

21. L. J. Burkholder, Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, 1935, pp. 218ff. The Mennonite Encyclopedia, ed. H. S. Bender and C. H. Smith, Scottdale, Pa., 1955, Vol. I, pp. 90-92.

22. W. I. Schreiber, The Fate of the Prussian Mennonite, Göttingen, 1955.

23. Adolf Ehrt, Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart, Langensalza, 1932.

24. W. Kuhn, "Cultural Achievement of the Chortitza Mennonites", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, pp. 35-38; Hans von Eckardt, Russia, New York, 1933, pp. 233-244.

ization program. The passing of the general conscription law, and the more rigid control of school and public administration prompted many Mennonites once again to prepare for migration.[24] William Hespeler, a Canadian of German origin from Waterloo County, Ontario, while visiting in Germany in 1872, learned of Mennonite intentions. He reported this to the Canadian immigration officials whereupon he was authorized as a special emigration agent to contact the Mennonites and assure them of a welcome in Canada. While in Russia he advised the Mennonites to appoint a delegation to investigate the lands in Canada.[24a] Thereafter the Mennonites of Russia inquired concerning the possibilities of migration to Canada.[24b] The Dominion Government invited representatives of the Mennonite colonies to the Canadian West, with Jacob Y. Shantz and Hespeler acting as middlemen between the Mennonites and the government.[24c] The delegation selected land in the Red River Valley as the site of the proposed settlement. In March 1873 an Order-in-Council reserved eight townships in one compact block.[25] In a letter dated July 25, 1873 John

---

24. J.J. Hildebrand, Aus der Vorgeschichte der Einwanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1949; D.D. Rempel, "From Russia to Canada Twenty-Five Years Ago", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, p. 42

24a. E.H. Correll, "Mennonite Immigration into Manitoba:Sources and Documents",Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct.,1937, pp. 267-283; Jan.,1948, pp. 43-57.

24b. C.A. Dawson, Group Settlement:Ethnic Communities in Western Canada, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. VII, Toronto, 1936,pp.100-102.

24c. J. M. Hofer (ed.), "Diary of Paul Tschetter, 1873", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1931, pp. 112-128; Oct., 1931, pp. 198-219; Kempes Schnell (ed.), "John F. Funk's Land Inspection Trip as recorded in his Diaries, 1872 and 1873", Ibid., Oct.,1950, pp. 295-311; George Leibrandt, "The Emigration of the German Mennonites from Russia to the United States and Canada, 1873-1880, II", Ibid., Jan.,1933, pp. 15ff.; Unpublished letter to John F. Funk's wife, dated on board a Red River Steamer, June 27, 1873, Mennonite Archives, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

25. See section 2 of Order-in-Council, March 3, 1873.

Lowe, then Secretary in the Department of Agriculture assured the Mennonites of exemption from military service and from oaths, and the privilege of operating their own religious schools.[25a] Confident that their interests would be safeguarded, the Mennonites began to migrate in 1874 and by 1879 a total of approximately 6000 of them had settled on the Manitoba Mennonite Reserves.

Meanwhile those Mennonites who remained in Russia considered the concessions of the Russian government for some kind of alternative service in lieu of military service as a satisfactory solution. These enjoyed rapid social and economic progress until World War I.

During the reign of anarchy following in the wake of the Communist revolution, thousands of Mennonites were killed or starved to death and others fled from their once prosperous homes.[25b] In the 1920's some 25,000 Mennonites left Russia for Canada, Brazil and Paraguay.

When the German armies penetrated Russia during World War II, thousands of Mennonites and others fled into Germany and other European countries. Many of these later migrated to Canada and the United States. How many remained in Russia and just what their status is, no one seems to know.

It becomes apparent then, that Mennonites have come to the new world in fairly well-defined waves. The influx during

---

25a. See section 1 and 10 of letter, July 25, 1873, signed John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture. For copy of letter see Appendix A, 270, below.

25b. Gerhard Fast, "Mennonites in the Ukraine under Stalin and Hitler", Mennonite Life, April, 1947, p. 18.

the colonial period consisted of Swiss and Amish Mennonites who settled principally in William Penn's colony and later in Ohio, Indiana,[26] and Illinois. Later some migrated from these states to Ontario, western Canada and to western United States.[27] Then, beginning in the 1870's, came the great exodus from Russia. These and all subsequent migrants were of Dutch and German origin. They settled principally in Manitoba and in smaller numbers in the prairie states of Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Kansas.[28] The next large influx was that of the Mennonite refugees from Russia during the 1920's.[29] Practically all of these moved into Canada, settling in Ontario and the prairie provinces. The last large-scale movement of Mennonites following World War II consisted of refugees from Russia and the Danzig area of Germany. Most of these came to Canada,

---

26. H. F. Weber, Centennial History of Mennonites of Illinois, Goshen, Indiana, 1931; Henry C. Smith, The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century, Morristown, Pa., 1929.

27. John Mitchell, The Settlement of York County, Toronto, 1952; E. A. Cruikshank, A Century of Municipal History, 1792-1892, compiled from the municipal records of the County of Welland, Ontario, 1892-1893; E. C. Guillet, Pioneer Life in the County of York, Toronto, 1946; R. Harper, The early history of Haldimand County, Caledonia, Ontario, 1950.

28. E. H. Correll, "Mennonite Immigration into Manitoba," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Vol. XI, July, 1937, Vol. XI, Oct., 1937; E. H. Correll,"President Grant and the Mennonite Immigration from Russia," Ibid., Vol. IX, July, 1935; George Leibbrandt, "Emigration of the German Mennonite from Russia to the U.S. and Canada in 1873-1880" Ibid., Vol. VI, Oct., 1932, Vol. VII, Jan., 1933; Cornelius Krahn, From the Steppes to the Prairies, Newton, Kansas, 1949.

29. Paul J. Schäfer, Die Mennoniten in Canada, Altona, Manitoba, 1947.

although sizeable numbers migrated to Paraguay and Uruguay.

These Mennonites who came to the United States and Canada through this series of migrations differed or soon came to differ in religious matters. There arose a large number of religious groupings among them.

Some groups originated because Mennonites came to America from various countries and at various times. They settled in the United States and Canada where they retained their practices, adjusting themselves to the local environment rather slowly and reluctantly. In many cases one Mennonite settlement did not know much about another and pioneer conditions did not permit contact.

Divisions arose also when Mennonites were challenged in their beliefs and practices by some environmental influences. When a religious revival penetrated a community, Mennonites would be challenged to accept or reject the new ideas or methods of promoting Christianity. Some Mennonites would accept the innovations. Such a group would then seek separation from the main body of Mennonites in that particular community. Sometimes a minority would break away because it considered that too many new ideas and methods already had been accepted by the majority.

As long as adjustment or change proceeded gradually no great disturbance was caused, but whenever innovations appeared in too obvious ways or were presented with impatience by their advocates, divisions often resulted. Frequently attempts to produce a rapid change

from the German to the English language aroused tensions. In many instances church leaders opposed the emphasis on a personal conversion experience as taught by some revivalists and accepted by an increasing number of Mennonites. The introduction of Sunday Schools and other new methods of church extension also resulted in serious discord.

Of the great number of groups only six were represented in Alberta in 1960. These were the Old Mennonites, the Church of God in Christ Mennonites, the United Missionary Church, the Old Colony Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the General Conference of the Mennonite Church. A small contingent of Amish Mennonites had settled in Alberta but later joined the Old Mennonites.

Most of these groups can be broadly classified under two sections, namely the German-Swiss groups and the Russo-German groups. To the former belong the Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, the Church of God in Christ, Mennonites and the General Conference of the Mennonite church. However, of these, the latter two groups gained a substantial number of adherents from the Russo-German Mennonites. Two other groups, the Old Colony Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren, belong to the Russo-German classification. Figure 1 may help explain the rather complex series of divisions which have resulted in the six Mennonite bodies of Alberta.

The Old Mennonites constituted the main body of German-Swiss groups.[30] They were distinguished by their traditional religious

---

30. For a discussion of the Old Mennonites refer to:-John C. Wenger, op. cit., p. 128.

RUSSO- GERMAN GROUPS

GERMAN-SWISS GROUPS

Descendants of the original settlers in Russia who came to Canada during the 1870's, 1920's, 1940's and 1950's

Old Mennonites
The original German Swiss body of Mennonites

Old Mennonites
First settlers came to America in 1663

Brethren in Christ
Organized in 1838 in Switzerland; came to America in 1852

General Conference Mennonites
Organized in America in 1860. Many of the Mennonites from Russia joined this body

Evangelical Mennonites
Organized in 1858 in America.

New Mennonites
Organized in 1874. An Ontario group.

Church of God in Christ, Mennonite
Began in 1859. Known as the Holdemanites. Migrants from Russia joined this body

Reformed Mennonites
organized in 1812 in America

Mennonite Brethren
Organized in 1860 in Russia and in America in 1889

United Mennonites
Organized in 1875 in America

Evangelical United Mennonites
Organized in 1879 in America

Old Colony Mennonites
Came to Canada in the 1870's from the "Old Colony" in Russia.

Mennonite Brethren in Christ
Organized in 1883 in America

Old Mennonites
continued to present day

United Missionary Church
Name changed in 1947

FIGURE I-Origin of the six Mennonite Groups in Alberta

These are the Old Mennonites, the United Missionary Church, the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, (Holdemanites), the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren and the Old Colony.

This chart serves as a basis for the discussion on the succeeding pages.

and social practices and customs. They required that women wear bonnets, that men wear plain coats and no mustache, and that jewelry and other ornaments be avoided. Old Mennonites would not tolerate participation in labour unions, membership in secret societies, holding life insurance, attendance at commercial amusements, and marriage outside the membership of the church. Musical instruments, choral, quartette, duet or solo singing, and wedding marches were forbidden. Dress for both men and women was to be plain and modest. Ministers were chosen by lot from the congregation. The Dordrecht Confession of Faith of 1632 was the official statement of doctrine.[31] Old Mennonites emphasized the learning of the "catechism" and the obedience to the precepts of scripture, but had departed from the doctrine of the new birth as taught by Menno Simons.

A small number of Amish Mennonites who came to Alberta between 1901 and 1911, later joined the Old Mennonites. This merger was possible because the religious practices of the two groups were so similar. These Amish Mennonites were a part of the more moderate group of Amish of Pennsylvania who had discarded some of the severe dress regulations and had accepted some of the practices of the Old Mennonites.[32]

---

31. The text of the Dordrecht Confession can be found in:- Wenger, op, cit., p. 215ff.

32. For a description of the Amish Mennonites see:-C. G. Bachman, The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Morristown, Pa., 1942; Proceedings of the Pennsylvania German Society, Vol. XLIX, 1941, pp. 1-297; Jane C. Getz, "The Economic Organization and Practices of the Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pa.," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, January, 1946; April, 1946.

The Mennonite Brethren in Christ, now the United Missionary Church, resulted from a merger of four small groups.[33] Three of these groups, namely, the Reformed Mennonites, the New Mennonites and the Evangelical Mennonites arose out of divisions among Old Mennonites. The fourth group, the Brethren in Christ, originated in Basel, Switzerland.

In 1812 John Herr and a few friends left the Old Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and organized the Reformed Mennonites. Herr and his followers claimed that they had experienced a religious awakening through a study of Menno Simon's writings. They maintained that the Old Mennonites had departed far from the beliefs of Menno Simons. Among the "carnal practices" censured by Herr were voting at elections, taking part in political campaigns, foolish talking and jesting, excessive drinking, and attending country fairs.

In 1874 two groups, expelled from the Old Mennonite Church, joined the Reformed Mennonites. One of these groups was led by Daniel Brenneman of Elkhart County, Indiana. He had been in contact with the Reformed Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he was born and educated. In 1874 he was excommunicated from the Old Mennonite Church because he advocated the use of English and revival meetings. In these matters he reflected the influence of Methodist evangelists with whom he had associated.

---

33. For a detailed study of these developments see:-J. A. Huffman, History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, 1920; Everek Richard Storms, History of the United Missionary Church, Elkhart, Indiana, 1958; A. W. Climanhaga, History of the Brethren in Christ Church, Nappanee, Indiana, 1942.

The other dissenting group was led by Solomon Eby of Waterloo County, Ontario. He had been ordained to the ministry in the Old Mennonite Church. After eleven years of preaching he was converted as a result of the revivalist activities of the Methodists.[34] Following his conversion, Eby zealously preached the doctrine of the new birth. As a result of this emphasis in his ministry, he was expelled from the Old Mennonite Church in 1874. During this same year, both Brenneman and Eby, with their followers joined the Reformed Mennonites.

"New Mennonites" was a colloquial name given locally to Ontario Mennonites who had been expelled from the Old Mennonite Church in 1874. These groups consisted of Daniel Hock's supporters. Under Hock's leadership, several assemblies of Old Mennonites practised evangelistic and prayer meetings contrary to the religious practices of the Old Mennonite Church. This occasioned their expulsion.

In 1875 the Reformed Mennonites and the New Mennonites amalgamated to form the United Mennonites.

The Evangelical Mennonites were a schismatic group led by William Gehman who was an Old Mennonite preacher. Through the influence of Methodist preachers, Gehman in 1856 began private prayer meetings contrary to the practices of the Old Mennonite Church. A year later two preachers, Gehman and Schelly, along with two deacons and 24 others were expelled by the Old Mennonites. In 1858 this group organized the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

In 1879 the United Mennonites and the Evangelical Mennonites

---

34. W. L. Smith, The Pioneers of Old Ontario, Toronto, 1923, p. 318.

amalgamated to form the Evangelical United Mennonites. The merger was easily affected because there were really no differences in religious practices and beliefs.

The Brethren in Christ originated in Switzerland. In 1852 thirty families migrated from Basel, Switzerland to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Here their extremely conservative religious practices were modified by Lutheran, Baptist and Methodist influences. Later some of the Brethren in Christ migrated to Ohio where they became known as "River Brethren" because of their practice of baptizing in the river. In 1883 some of the Ohio groups under the leadership of John Wenger, joined the Evangelical United Mennonites. The purpose of amalgamation was to strengthen the small groups by providing them with the benefits of a larger organization. With the amalgamation the name of the organization was changed to Mennonite Brethren in Christ, known after 1947 as the United Missionary Church.

The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite constitutes another group which grew out of disagreement within the Old Mennonite Church.[35] At the age of twenty-one, John Holdeman, a layman in the Old Mennonite church of Wayne County, Ohio, claimed to have experienced the "new birth" and forgiveness of sins. From a study of the scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, and those of Menno Simons, Holdeman became convinced that the Old Mennonites had departed far from the true doctrine of salvation by faith alone. In 1859, claiming that he was guided in his course of action by visions and dreams, he began to

---

35. See:-John M. Penner, A Concise History of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Hesston, Kansas, 1953.

hold separate meetings. He soon established an organization which he called the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

Holdeman left the Old Mennonites because they refused to accept the doctrine of salvation by faith and placed little importance upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In matters of dress and conduct Holdeman advocated a more extreme conservatism. He taught that men must wear beards for this was part of the moral law of God. On most other matters he was in agreement with the Old Mennonites.

Although Holdeman and his first followers came out of the Old Mennonite Church, the greater portion of his later following came from the Russo-German Mennonites who migrated from Russia during the 1870's and settled in the middle western states of the United States and in Manitoba.

A fourth group that resulted from a division within the Old Mennonite Church was the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America.[36] The man most influential in organizing this group was John H. Oberholtzer. The most characteristic thing about him was the multiplicity of his contacts with the "outside". As a school teacher he was better educated than most of his fellow preachers. In 1842 he was ordained to the ministry and soon showed liberal tendencies not current among his brethren. He was aggressive, independent in spirit, zealous for a more active church program and somewhat impat-

---

36. See:- S. F. Pannabecker, "John H. Oberholtzer and his time" Mennonite Life, June, 1947, p.39; J. P. Krehbiel, The History of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, 2 volumes, St. Louis, Mo. 1898 and Hesston, Kansas, 1938; J. C. Wenger, History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference, Telford, Pa., 1937.

ient with his conservative fellow ministers.

Oberholtzer and his friends advocated a more tolerant attitude toward the non-Mennonite world, both political and religious. As an effective speaker he was invited to speak in neighbouring school houses and in non-Mennonite churches of surrounding communities.

The first point of disagreement between Oberholtzer and the Old Mennonite church leaders arose over the cut of the clerical coat which was to be plain and collarless. For some years he had refused to wear this clerical garb. In 1844 the conference denied the right to vote at Council meetings to all those refusing to comply with regulations.

This gave rise to another point of contention, namely the loose organization of the Old Mennonite conference. Oberholtzer charged that this enabled the leading ministers to deny fellow ministers a hearing on their demands. He, therefore, proposed a written constitution with set rules of procedure. In this he had the support of his own bishop, John Hunsicker and thirteen ministers and deacons. Instead of obtaining a favorable hearing, the group was expelled from the Old Mennonite Church.

In 1847, just a few weeks later, Hunsicker and Oberholtzer organized the East Pennsylvania District of Mennonites. Oberholtzer and his followers made contacts with other like-minded congregations. This culminated in the founding of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America in 1860 at West Point, Iowa.

A few years after its founding, the Oberholtzer group sanc-

tioned a number of liberal practices. They allowed the use of courts in "a just cause". They removed all dress restrictions among both clergy and laity. They soon advocated a paid and educated ministry, open communion and outside marriages. The group organized Sunday schools, used musical instruments in church services, organized a missionary society in 1865, and founded the first American Mennonite religious paper in 1852.

Thus the General Conference of the Mennonite church of North America also resulted from a schism among Old Mennonites. Consequently the first members of the new organization were of German-Swiss background. This was changed when during and after the 1870's, the General Conference of Mennonites gained large numbers from the Russo-German immigrants. After the 1920's the membership of the organization was predominantly of Russo-German background.

The Mennonite Brethren Church began with the Russo-German colonists of the Molotschna Mennonite settlement in South Russia.[37] Edward Weist, a Baptist evangelist from a near-by colony of German Evangelicals, preached the necessity of the "new birth". Some eighteen families responded to this doctrine of salvation by faith alone and in 1860 organized the Mennonite Brethren Church (Mennoniten Brudergemeinde).

In 1862 they were joined by another congregation of "awakened brethren." These resided in the extremely conservative Chor-

---

37. See:-John H. Lohrenz, The Mennonite Brethren Church, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1950; Cornelius Krahn, "Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites of Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1935.

titzer Mennonite colony. Revival here began with Abraham Unger who read the sermons of a Baptist minister, Ludwig Hofacher. It was a Baptist who ordained Unger as an elder. Yet when in 1872 the Mennonite Brethren groups of South Russia united in a conference, the body was characteristically Mennonite.

During and after the 1870's a large number of the Mennonite Brethren migrated to the United States and Canada. In 1878 the Mennonite Brethren congregation in America inaugurated annual conferences of ministers. In 1889 at one such convention the Conference of the United Mennonite Brethren of North America was founded.

The Mennonite Brethren, although more conservative than the General Conference of Mennonites, were in many respects more liberal than the other Mennonite groups of Alberta. The conservatism consisted in their adherence to Menno Simon's doctrine of the depravity of man and the need for the "new birth". They also opposed outside marriages, resort to courts, swearing oaths, membership in secret societies, smoking, drinking and dancing. They differed from other Mennonite groups in that they practiced baptism by immersion upon confession of faith in Christ as a personal redeemer. The liberalism of the Mennonite Brethren was evident in their acceptance of the Sunday School, prayer, evangelistic and revival meetings, and missionary associations. They used musical instruments in church services and organized choirs and other musical groups. They also worked toward an educated ministry. In matters of dress and conduct the Mennonite Brethren were not as rigid as, for instance, the

Old Mennonite, Holdemanites or Old Colony Mennonites. They did, however, emphasize the necessity of a simple life, separated from the "world". Like all other groups, the Mennonite Brethren upheld the principles of non-resistance.

The Old Colony Mennonites were so called because they came from the first Mennonite settlement in Russia. Mennonites of Dutch background had settled in Prussia and the Danzig areas. When the Prussianization program threatened to force conformity to the German environment the Mennonites found an escape by moving to Russia. The Chortitza Mennonite settlement, the first of its kind in Russia was established in 1789.[38] It thus became known as the "Old Colony". When in 1870 the Czar began the Russification program, Mennonites once again migrated. Those who came to Manitoba from the Chortitza settlement formed the group known as Old Colony Mennonites.

In the pioneer days of Russia the Chortitza or Old Colony Mennonites were poorer, less educated and more conservative than the Mennonites who came to Russia later.[39] This religious and cultural conservatism furnished the roots for the spirit and characteristics of the Old Colony Mennonites of Alberta. Their main concern was the preservation of their "way of life". They always sought to

---

38. For a detailed discussion of this settlement see:- Dr. David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Migration to New Russia (1787-1870)", Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1935 and July, 1935.

39. For a detailed discussion see:- D. H. Epp, Die Chortitzer Mennoniten, Chortitz, Russia; Klaas Peters, Die Bergthaler Mennoniten and deren Auswanderung aud Ruszland und Einwanderung in Manitoba, Hillsboro, Kansas, n.d.; W. Rempel, "Die Mennoniten in Süd-Manitoba", Bundesbote Kalender, 1898.

keep contact with the outside world at a minimum. In order to maintain an extreme form of separation from the world, Old Colony Mennonites practised church discipline by means of the ban and avoidance. By avoiding contact with the "world" and other religious organizations they deprived themselves of the challenges and influences which come through such contact.

CHAPTER ONE

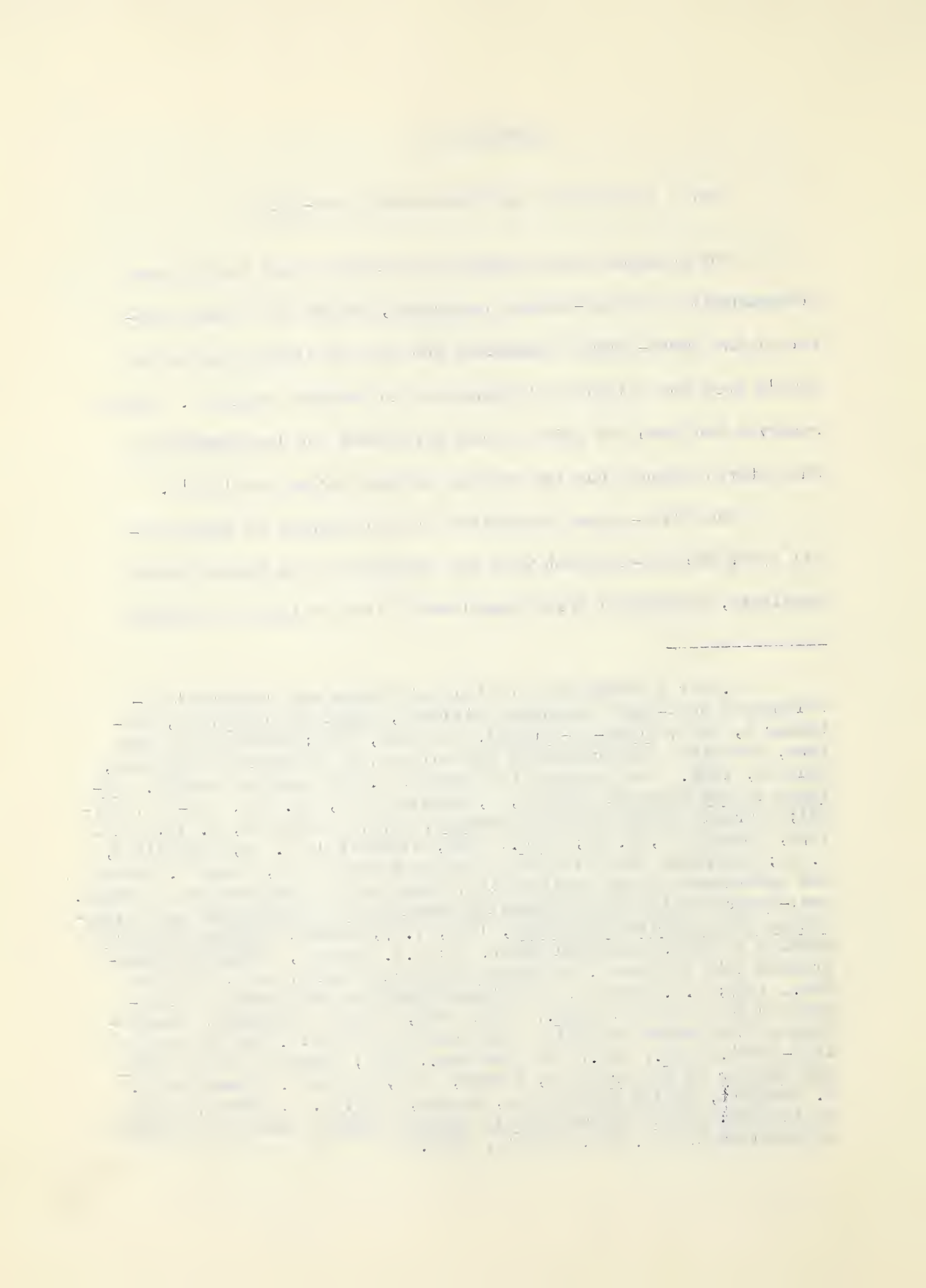
Early Immigration and Settlement (1886-1913)

The Mennonites who migrated to Alberta prior to 1914 were predominantly of Swiss-German background, except for a small number of the Russo-German Mennonites who came to Alberta during the 1890's from the colonies of Mennonites in Southern Manitoba. These reserves had been set aside by the government for the Mennonites who entered Canada from the Russian steppes during the 1870's.[1]

The Swiss-German Mennonites did not migrate to Canada until 1786. when, co-incident with the movement of the United Empire Loyalists, Mennonites from Pennsylvania first settled at Vineland

---

1. For a description of this migration and subsequent developments see:-"Our Mennonite Settlers", Manitoba Free Press, September 2, 1881; Order-in-council, April 26, 1872; Letter from John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, to Mennonite delegation, July 25, 1873. See Appendix A of thesis, p.270 for copy of letter. Debates of the House of Commons, I, Session 1875, pp. 141, 249-252, 277-291; Journals of the House of Commons, 1876, Appendix 8, p. 13; Ibid., 1878, Appendix 2, p. 16; Ibid., 1879, Appendix 1, p. 69; Appendix 3, p. 17; Regarding assimilation of Manitoba Mennonites, Jacob Y. Shantz was questioned by the Parliamentary Committee on Immigration at Ottawa. See:-Report of the Select Standing Committee on Immigration and Colonization of the House of Commons, 1886, p.27; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1893, Sessional Paper, 13; E.H. Correll, "Mennonite Immigration into Manitoba", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1937 and Oct., 1937; E.H. Correll, "President Grant and the Mennonite Immigration from Russia", Ibid., July, 1935; George Leibbrandt, "Emigration of the German Mennonite from Russia to the U.S. and Canada in 1873-1888", Ibid., Oct., 1932 and Jan., 1933; Cornelius Krahn, From the Steppes to the Prairies, Kansas, 1949; Gustav E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, Exiled by the Czar, Kansas, 1956; C. A. Dawson, Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. VII, Toronto, 1936.



in Lincoln County, Upper Canada.[2] Between 1800 and 1820 some two thousand Mennonites joined the earlier migrants in Ontario. Others joined their brethren in the American West. In Ontario some Mennonites settled in the Niagara district in the present counties of Lincoln, Welland and Haldimand. Another settlement was established in York County at Markham and Whitechurch while a third colony arose on the banks of Grand River.[3]

Just a little over a hundred years after Mennonites first settled in Ontario, another migration began, this time to Saskatchewan and Alberta. While most of these settlers came from the United States and Ontario, a few came from the Manitoba Mennonite

---

2. C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, Kansas, 1957, p. 590; Simcoe Papers, Volume III, p. 172;
Miss Mabel Dunham, the long time librarian of the Kitchener Public Library has given the early Ontario Mennonite history a literary treatment of good quality in two novels:-The Trail of the Conestaga, Toronto, 1924, and Toward Sodom, Toronto, 1927. The first of these deals with the immigrants to Waterloo County, Ontario from Pennsylvania and their early settlement in Canada. The latter gives a picture of the religious problems created later in the same settlement by isolation from and non-conformity to the "world" and the consequent loss of many young people to other creeds and faiths. She contends that the trend toward the city is fatal to Mennonitism.

3. For information on the Mennonite settlements in Ontario see:-L. J. Burkholder, Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, 1935; E. A. Cruikshank, A century of municipal history, 1792-1892, Welland, 1892-3; E. C. Guillet, Pioneer Life in the County of York, Toronto, 1946; R. Harper, The early history of Haldimand County, Caledonia, Ontario, 1950; John Mitchell, The Settlement of York County, Toronto, 1952; R. B. Nelles, County of Haldimand in the days of Auld Lang Syne, Port Hope, Ontario, 1905; W. H. Breithaupt, "The Settlements of Waterloo County", Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, XXII, 1925, p. 14ff.; L. J. Burkholder, "The Early Mennonite Settlement in Ontario", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1934, pp. 103-122.

colonies[4] where the "wird" tradition was being perpetuated. In the Mennonite agrarian society, a "wird" was one who held a specified amount of land. In the Ukraine the standard was approximately 175 acres. These holdings were indivisible, the number of "wirde" in each colony remaining constant. This resulted in an ever increasing number of non-inheriting children. The "wird" tradition was continued in a modified form in the Manitoba colony. Because of this and the high natural increase Manitoba Mennonites were soon looking for more land which was available in the Canadian West.

The Mennonite settlements in Alberta and Saskatchewan, unlike the settlements in Southern Manitoba, were not formed through the transfer of entire colonies. Settlers in any one community often came from different places and had different backgrounds. With the exception of the Holdemanites at Linden it was rarely possible to form a solid Mennonite community because non-Mennonite settlers penetrated the West in large numbers and Mennonites came to different localities in small numbers over a period of several years.

A substantial number of the migrants into the Canadian West, after 1896, came from the United States.[5] Some of the motives

---

4. Report on Mennonite Colonies, by Henry C. Jacobson, Dominion Government Intelligence Officer, to the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, Sept. 9, 1889; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1890, Sessional Paper 6, p. 146ff.; Ibid., 1892, 7, p. 12; Ibid., 1894, 13, p. 146; Ibid., 1896, 13, p. 8; Ibid., 1897, 13, pp. 14 and 125.

5. Trains from the American Middle West often had twenty carloads of equipment and as many as five hundred immigrants. Ibid., 1899, 13, pt. 2, p. 272; Ibid., 1901, 25, pt. 2, p. 175; Manitoba Free Press, March 31, 1919; An estimate of the number of Americans who entered the Canadian West was complicated by the casual manner in which many migrants made the trek without contacting the regular customs channels. Canadian officials estimated that 920,000 Americans had come to Canada by 1914. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1914, Sessional Paper 25, pt.2, p. 103; By 1920 this number had increased to one and a quarter million. Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1920, p. 241.

prompting this population movement were the same for both Mennonite and non-Mennonite migrants. One of these was the economic. By 1898 the American West was settled and land prices were high. Land hungry farmers therefore turned north where they found cheap land which did not require new and unfamiliar techniques of farming. The acceptance of a homestead philosophy incorporated into the Dominion Land policies provided land at a nominal fee. At the same time land whose fertility had declined could be sold in the American West for more than fifty dollars an acre.[6] To this must be added the fact that from 1904 to 1910 immigration into Alberta coincided with a period of more than average rainfall at a time when wheat and cattle prices were rising in response to the demands of Europe's industrial population.

The economic motive was supplemented by the desire to keep every member of a family on the soil.[7] In the United States many deplored the trend toward urbanization. Many American farmers sought to avoid this rush to the cities by migrating to the Canadian prairies. This aversion toward life in urban centers as expressed by farmers generally was even more strongly felt by Mennonites with their agrarian tradition and their emphasis on simplicity,

---

6. Ray A. Billington and J. B. Hedges, Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier, N.Y., pp. 753-55; W. A. Mackintosh, "Some Aspects of a Pioneer economy", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, Nov., 1936, p. 460; Chester Martin and A. S. Morton, History of Prairie Settlement and Dominion Lands Policy, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. II, Toronto, 1938; Agnes C. Laut, "The Last Trek to the Last Frontier", Century Magazine, May, 1909, pp. 99-112

7. Manitoba Free Press, March 31, 1919.

purity, and separation from the "world". The freedom, diversity, anonymity, and excitement of urban life, Mennonites felt, would encourage hedonism, while the rural pattern of living with its stress on hard work, strong informal social controls, and lack of opportunity for dissipation would promote self-denial and restraint.

The advertising done by the Canadian government, the railway, and land companies, also attracted many into western Canada. Clifford Sifton, head of the Department of the Interior, made special efforts to interest American farmers because they possessed the capital, farming experience and resourcefulness that would make them successful in the Canadian Prairies.[8] Immigrants from the United States were preferred also because they would be more readily assimilated.[9] The Canadian government, railway, and land companies developed a highly effective system of land agent coverage. These agents with their literature and wheat samples attracted many settlers.[10]

A further stimulus to the settlement of the Canadian West

---

8. John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to his Times, Toronto, 1931, p. 339.

9. Grain Growers' Guide, 9:6, Feb. 16, 1916; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1913, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 91.

10. By 1905 Canadian land agents were stationed in most of the major cities of the American West. There were at the same time some seventy seven travelling agents. Ibid., 1906, 25, pt. 2, p. 49; In addition to these agents the virtues of farming in the Canadian West were advertised in over seven thousand newspapers, pamphlets, tracts, and journals. Ibid., 1909, 25, pt. 2, p. 88; Ibid., 1899, 13, pt. 2, p. 106; Perhaps the best advertisement was provided by the record of Seager Wheeler who five times was the world's champion grower of hard Spring Wheat. Grain Growers' Guide, 11:5, Oct. 30, 1918; The exhibits of Canadian crops were unusually effective in attracting immigrants. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1905, Sessional Paper, 25, pt. 2, p. 31; Ibid., 1914, 25, pt. 2, p. 107.

was the appeal to racial and religious groups. The opportunities afforded by the West for the establishment of strong ethnic communities attracted,among others, groups of French Canadians,[11] German Lutherans, Galicians, Hutterites, Mennonites and Mormons. These groups with European backgrounds had settled in the United States and Canada but moved on when neighboring communities proved unfriendly or possibilities for expansion became limited.[12]

The Mennonites who came to Alberta prior to 1914, like other settlers from Eastern Canada and the United States, had a background of over a hundred years of farming experience in America and possessed the necessary capital.[13] In contrast to many of the English and Continental Europeans, the Mennonites and other American immigrants not only possessed the necessary experience but were well prepared for life in a rural society.[14] Those who had the ready capital, the agricultural equipment, and the personal property, and this included most Mennonite settlers, were able to create a comfortable living in a relatively short time, thus bypassing the long and arduous years

---

11. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1914, Sessional Paper 25, Pt. 2, p. 107; Ibid., 1898, 13, Pt. 2, p. 111; Debates of the House of Commons of Canada, 1909, 1:pp. 830-834; Ibid., 1907-1908, 1:p. 1324

12. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1901, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 167; Donald Buchanan, "Mormons in Canada", Canadian Geographical Journal, April, 1931, pp. 255-270; Accounts of religious and racial group migrations may be found in Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1905, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 144; Ibid., 1914, 25, p. 106; Ibid., 1900, 13, pt. 2, p. 180; Ibid., 1901, 25, pt. 2, p. 167; Ibid., 1904, 25, pt. 1, p. 26.

13. Ibid., 1911, 25, p. 29; Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1920, p. 242.

14. Grain Growers' Guide, Vol. IX, No. 6, February 16, 1916; Vol. IV, No. 38, September 20, 1911; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1913, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 91.

of pioneer life common to most frontiers. To this possession of capital and experience was added the advantage of transportation provided by the main lines of railroads which penetrated the West before the large population movement began.[15]

The first Mennonite settlers to come to Alberta were members of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ who had been expelled from the Old Mennonite Church because they had accepted some of the religious practices of non-Mennonite churches.[16] In July, 1892, Jacob Y. Shantz, a prominent layman of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, trekked west to select a site in Western Canada for the settlement of some of the Mennonite groups in Ontario.[17] After surveying various parts of Alberta he finally selected the Didsbury area.[18] He then returned east to round up some immigrants. Shantz's reports attracted some Mennonite parents who, wishing to perpetuate their religion and agrarian culture, needed cheap lands for their sons and daughters. On April 10, 1894, Shantz left Kitchener, Ontario with thirty-four settlers and seven car loads of goods. Some of the migrants came

---

15. Chester Martin and A. S. Morton, op. cit., pp. 65-139; pp. 244-298; Alberta N.W.T., Report of Six Years Experience of a Farmer in the Red Deer District, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture, 1890.

16. Introduction, pp. 9,10, above.

17. For a full account of Shantz's contribution to western colonization see:- Melvin Gingerich,"Jacob Y. Shantz, 1822-1909, Promoter of the Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1950, pp. 230-247; Survey of Didsbury, prepared by the Industrial Development Branch, Department of Economic Affairs, Government of the Province of Alberta, August, 1959.

18. Gospel Banner, July 1, 1892, p. 9; Sept. 15, 1892, p. 8.

MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS IN ALBERTA PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I
Old Mennonite Church
Didsbury
Tofield
Carstairs
Acadia Valley
Duchess (est. during war period)
High River
Olds
General Conference Mennonite Church
Didsbury
Church of God in Christ, Mennonite
Linden
Mennonite Brethren in Christ
Didsbury
Castor
Alsask
Edmonton (mission only)
May City
Sunnyslope
Stettler
Youngstown
Galahad (est. during war period)
Edmonton
Tofield
Stettler
Castor
Galahad
Olds
May City
Didsbury
Carstairs
Sunnyslope
Linden
Youngstown
Alsask
Acadia Valley
Duchess
High River

from Michigan and others from the vicinity of Markham, Ontario. The next few years saw the arrival of more Mennonites from the east and the establishment of the town of Didsbury.

In the Spring of 1906 another group of Mennonites from Markham, Ontario arrived at Didsbury. They settled as a group in the Castor district,[19] where they soon organized the Markham congregation.

In 1910 several young farmers from Didsbury made a trek of 200 miles to the Alsask area. Here land was just being opened up for pioneers. At this time settlers of Didsbury were interested in getting homesteads for their sons who were now old enough to take up farming on their own.

Some members of the Old Mennonite Church, the parent body of all German-Swiss Mennonite groups in America,[20] came to Alberta during the years of the first great migration into the Canadian West. The first of these came in 1891 and others followed shortly thereafter. The settlement near High River owes its beginning to Elias W. Bricker who came west on the C.P.R.'s homeseeker's excursion in 1889. In 1891 Bricker and his family left Woolwich Township, Waterloo County, for a district thirty miles south of Calgary. Within ten years a dozen families had joined the High River colony. In the early Spring of 1901 under the direction of S. F. Coffman, this group organized into the Mount View congregation.

---

19. D. C. Eby's chapter, "The Canadian Northwest Conference" in J. A. Huffman, History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, 1920, p. 125.

20. See Introduction, p. 8, above.

Another Old Mennonite settlement arose near Didsbury. L. C. Snyder and Samuel Cressman homesteaded, with their families, in that district during 1893. In the same year Andrew Weber joined these pioneers. During 1900 and 1901 several other families headed by Israel R. Shantz[21] left Waterloo County to take up homesteads near their brethren at Didsbury. By 1901 the settlement was large enough to warrant the erection of a church. In the same year Rev. S. F. Coffman, who had been commissioned by the Ontario Old Mennonite Conference to help organize churches in the West, directed the organization of the West Zion Mennonite church. The colony later came to be known as the Carstairs settlement.

The Old Mennonites who came from northwestern Iowa first homesteaded seventeen miles east of Olds, in an area already largely occupied by non-Mennonites. In 1903 under the guidance of Bishop Elias Weber, these settlers organized into the Mayton congregation. Its membership soon numbered 24, a figure which was never exceeded in subsequent years. Surrounded on every hand by those of other religious convictions, lacking strength in numbers, and unable to settle in the traditionally close proximity, these Old Mennonites gradually moved out of the district. By 1918 practically the entire congregation had relocated in the Tofield area and subsequently joined the Salem Mennonite congregation there.[22]

---

21. This family name is common to both the Old Mennonite and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, e.g. there were Shantz's in both religious groups. Some had left the Old Mennonite Church while, in Ontario, others continued in membership.

22. The Mennonite Encyclopedia, ed. H. S. Bender and C. H. Smith, Scottdale, Pa., 1955, Vol. IV, p. 405.

At Tofield the Old Mennonites established their strongest community in Alberta. Such a concentration of Mennonites in one district was possible because many of the Norwegians who had homesteaded in the Tofield area during the 1880's had found depression and pioneering conditions too trying and unrewarding. Consequently most of them moved elsewhere. When the return of prosperity revived the streams of immigrants, large tracts of land lay vacant in the Burdon district, a few miles east of Tofield. Every section revealed evidence of homesteader efforts. Two brothers, O. C. and T. A. Blackburn from Nebraska, both non-Mennonite land agents, interested some of the Amish Mennonites of Seward County, Nebraska in taking up land near Tofield. Among the first settlers of the Amish group were Chris Sutter, John L. Stauffer, Peter Reil, Valentine Roth and Joe Stauffer.[23] In 1911 some 75 families migrated to the district.[24] The soil was fertile, rainfall was abundant, and the colony prospered. In 1915, when the prospect of further additions to their number disappeared, this Amish group joined the Old Mennonite conference.[25] This was possible because the Amish who had come to Alberta were more liberal than their brethren in the United States. The conservatism of the Old Mennonites near Tofield, the close proximity of the Amish and Old Mennonite settlements, and the agrarianism of both groups facilitated the merger. This was, however, the only instance in Alberta of a whole congregation of one Mennonite group affiliating

---

23. Correspondence with Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, Alberta, June 18, 1959.

24. Tofield Standard, March 16, March 30, April 6, 1911; Ibid., April 18, 1912.

25. Correspondence with Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, June 18, 1959.

with another Mennonite conference.

Several other areas in Alberta attracted Old Mennonites prior to 1912. A few families from Michigan and Indiana migrated to the Youngstown district in 1910. This colony was organized into the Clearwater congregation which had a very promising beginning. Poor soil and subsequent drought conditions, however, caused most of the farmers to move out with the consequent dissolution of the church. The last Mennonite family left the district in 1924, moving to the Tofield area.

A few families from Waterloo, Ontario, settled at Acadia Valley in 1908[26] where some homesteads were still available. The groups always remained too small to organize a church. After a few years the members joined the Mennonite Brethren in Christ church in the vicinity.

In 1910 a number of Old Mennonite families located 65 miles south east of High River in the Snake Valley district where they were able to obtain homesteads. Because the available land was so limited further migration of Mennonites to this area was impossible. Therefore this group never became strong enough to establish a permanent work. Ministers from the Mount View congregation served the group for some time. Several of the members soon moved out of the district while those remaining joined other churches. Mennonite services were thus

---

26. Acadia Valley is located about 20 miles south west of Alsask, Saskatchewan.

discontinued.

It was during this same period of mass migration that the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite established a colony at Linden, about 40 miles north west of Calgary. This group originated with Holdeman who left the Old Mennonite Church because he felt that body was becoming too liberal.[27] In search of more isolation from an encroaching "world",[29] Rev. Samuel Boese in 1902 led a group from Oregon to the Linden district. The area was then unsettled and thus permitted a concentration of Mennonites in one community. In 1904 Rev. Peter Baerg, informed of the possibilities, led another group of settlers from Oregon to Linden.[32] Others came later from North Dakota and Kansas. For some years the Linden Mennonite community enjoyed its isolation.

One other group migrated to Alberta during this first period of westward expansion. These came from the southern Manitoba Mennonite settlement which had been established in the early 1870's.[34]

---

27. Introduction, p. 14, above.

29. Conference Reports from 1896 to 1950, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, cumulative, Hesston, Kansas, 1953; John Penner, A concise history of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Hesston, Kansas, 1953.

32. Ibid.

34. B. H. Unruh, Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen, Karlsruhe, Germany, 1955.

The independent development of this colony of Mennonites was uninterrupted for the first few years. The authorities were more concerned with attracting efficient settlers than with their cultural assimilation, or their social or political integration. The anticipated rush of settlers into the West did not materialize because of economic depression in the world, available lands in the American West, the problem of communication and marketing, and the European conditions which were not conducive to emigration until the late 1890's and early 1900's. The many problems facing the government of the newly created provinces precluded early interference in the internal affairs of the French, Icelandic and Mennonite group settlements. Furthermore, extensive government interference would have been undesirable as these bloc settlements made easier the advance into the West under primitive conditions. They made possible group work projects, the erection of schools, and the organization of population centres.

With continued prosperity and the high rate of natural increase the Manitoba Mennonites by 1893 faced the need for more land suitable to their type of farm economy and social organization.[35]

---

35. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1892, Sessional Paper 7, Appendix 12; Sessional paper 37; Ibid., 1893, 13.

Already in 1889 reports that many Mennonites of the Manitoba reserves were contemplating migration to the United States reached Ottawa. A Dominion Government Intelligence officer wrote concerning the grievances of the East Reserve Mennonites:[37]

> (they complain) that they have not land enough for their fast increasing families in their Reserves here, and that even some of the land they possess is in many places too stony and sandy for proper and advantageous cultivation....(the children who, at the time of their migration, had been small) have grown into men and women now, have married, and have got issue of their own. The old homestead is not now sufficient to support the whole family. Where the father has had means he has bought land, either adjoining or at some distance, for some son or son-in-law as the case might be. He is, however, unable thus to provide for three or four boys or as many girls, and hence a keen desire on the part of the younger people for pastures new. This is perhaps the principal reason why we have heard of dissatisfaction and emigration schemes amongst the Mennonites....The old people would willingly remain where they are, but if the younger people go it may not be so easy to keep the former back, as these people dread and are adverse to separation from their kindred.

The same agent reported that:

> The Western Reserve is much larger, contains a great many young men, who are also more enlightened, a number of them knowing the English language thoroughly. These wish to spread out, and unless good inducements are held out to retain them on this side of the boundary, they may do a good deal of harm.

Therefore when the Mennonites petitioned the government for the creation of a new reserve in the Rosthern-Hague district, Ottawa responded with the Order-in-Council of January 23, 1893 which stated that the odd numbered sections were to be bought from

---

37. Report on Mennonite Colonies, by Henry C. Jacobson, Dominion Government Intelligence Officer, to the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, Sept.9, 1889; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1890, Sessional Paper 6, pp. 146ff.

railroad companies and the even numbered sections to be obtained as homesteads. This made it possible for Mennonites to form a bloc settlement and settle together in hamlets. As a result settlers entered Rosthern, Hague and Warman districts in such numbers that by 1896 these settlements were described as prospering Mennonite communities.[38] By 1904 similar colonies had arisen in the Herbert and Swift Current areas. Many of those migrating to Saskatchewan were of the extremely conservative Old Colony group. These concentrated especially on the lands east of Hague and Warman and south of Swift Current.

Whereas a large number of Mennonites migrated from Manitoba to Saskatchewan only a small number came to Alberta. In 1901 some nineteen families and five single persons left Plum Coulee, Manitoba and settled near Didsbury.[39] The first church to serve this colony was erected in 1903. This settlement at Didsbury was the only colony of General Conference Mennonites in the province prior to the influx of the 1920's. They were less open to change than either the Mennonite Brethren in Christ or the Old Mennonites, having lived in Canada for only twenty years.[40] With the exception of a few men like Hiebert, they had lived all of these years under the influence of the Mennonite communitive exclusiveness in the reserves of southern Manitoba.

In each of the Mennonite communities established in Alberta,

---

38. Interview with Mr. J. Friesen, Hague, Saskatchewan. Mr. Friesen has in his possession correspondence, ledger sheets, minutes of village council and board meetings, and other original documents. These were consulted by the author; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1894, Sessional Paper 13, p. 146; 1896, 13, p. 8; 1897, 13, pp. 14, 125.

39. M. Weber, "Manuscript on the Didsbury Settlement", Thirty Eighth Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society, 1950.

40. A. O. MacRae, History of the Province of Alberta, Vol. II, The Western Canada History Co., 1912, pp. 811-813.

as in earlier Mennonite colonies the church was the center of the spiritual life and activity. The Mennonites of Didsbury and district are a good example of this. Here the pioneers erected a church even before they built houses to replace their hastily constructed shacks. There was at the time no church near Didsbury.[41] The minister of the church in Didsbury was J. B. Detwiler who was prominent in both religious and secular affairs. He also served non-Mennonites, officiating at marriages and burials.[42] Samuel S. Stauffer,[43] one of the pastors of the church, had a valuable assistant in Miss Maude Chatham who came west in 1900. As deaconess she soon became a familiar figure around Didsbury, as she rode over the district, faithfully discharging her duty.[44] In 1905 Samuel Goudie and Peter Shupe, both Ontario men, conducted an evangelistic campaign at Didsbury. A large tent was used for the purpose. During 1906 Harvey Traub conducted a revival campaign among non-Mennonites in the May City area north east of Olds. The result was an addition to the church of nineteen members, formerly non-Mennonites. Miss Chatham took charge of the work.

The first district conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ convened at Didsbury during December of 1906. Of the delegates at the conference 188 came from Alberta and of these 154 re-

---

41. M. Weber, "Manuscript on the Didsbury Settlement", Thirty Eighth Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society, 1950, p. 18.

42. Alvin Traub, Manuscript on the early history of Canadian North West District, written for a ministerial convention, 1954. Can be seen at Library, Mountainview Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

43. Gospel Banner, Nov. 1, 1902, p.8 and Aug. 1, 1903, p. 13.

44. E. R. Storms, History of the United Missionary Church, Indiana, 1958, p. 157.

sided in or near Didsbury. Following the convention the Canadian Northwest District of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ was organized. Henry Goudie took the leadership for twelve years following 1906.

A year after the organization of the Northwest District of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, Miss Chatham left her charge in May City and opened a mission in Edmonton. This endeavor concentrated on unmarried mothers and their children. In this work Miss Chatham received the able assistance of Mrs. Mary A. Finlay. The result of their labor was the Beulah Home of Edmonton.[45]

The Mennonite Brethren in Christ emphasized the conversion experience with a rather warm emotional expression, and aggressive evangelism.[46] This can be partially ascribed to the intensity of religious fervor prevalent in rural Ontario between 1830 and 1850. It was during these years that the tide of emigration from Europe was high. Family and community ties with the old land were broken. Hardships of many kinds pressed upon the pioneers, many of whom lived in isolation. Under these conditions the comforts of religion were deeply felt and the Methodist revival meetings had a strong impact upon many Mennonites. It was the evangelistic zeal thus imbibed that led the Mennonite Brethren in Christ to spread their influence beyond Didsbury into other parts of the province. In 1909

---

45. For an interesting article about this Home and Mrs. Mary Finlay, who was honored as citizen of the year 1962, see:-Edmonton Journal, July 26, 1962.

46. Huffman, op. cit.; Doctrines of Faith and Church Discipline of the Evangelical Mennonite Society of East Pennsylvania, Skippackville, 1867.

Samuel S. Stauffer conducted a series of tent meetings, first at Curlew and later at Sunnyslope.[47] During the same year Rev. Gugin held evangelistic campaigns in the Castor and Stettler areas. At Stettler he opened a city mission which was placed in charge of Miss Louisa Eby and Miss Mabel Adams.[48] H. Goudie extended his activities through the Markham and May City missions while Alvin Traub took charge of Buckeye school house services.[49] In July of 1910 the Mennonite Brethren in Christ opened their first children's Bible camp under the leadership of Miss Chatham and Rev. S. Cressman of Berlin, Ontario.[50]

The spirit of evangelism also led the Mennonite Brethren in Christ into foreign missions. Already in 1881 some Mennonites of the Ontario district had organized the Foreign and Heathen Missionary Society with John McNally[51] as president and Jacob Y. Shantz as secretary-treasurer. Two years later the newly adopted constitution of the organization stated, "the object of this society shall be the spreading of the gospel in foreign countries and among the heathen in our land".[52] In 1885 the Mennonite Brethren in Christ conference passed a resolution stipulating that each district conference should

---

47. Didsbury Pioneer, June 16, 1909.

48. Ibid., Sep. 8, 1909.

49. Ibid., Jan. 19, 1910.

50. Ibid., June 29, 1910.

51. John McNally joined the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in Ontario after attending their evengelistic services. Information obtained from correspondence with Rev. A. Traub, Mountainview Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

52. Gospel Banner, May 1, 1883.

"put forth earnest efforts to raise means for heathen mission work, and that each minister preach at least once a year at each of his appointments on the above subjects".[53] In 1907 the Didsbury Pioneer made special mention of a visit to the Mennonite Brethren in Christ by a missionary from China[54] and in 1909 it was reported that the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Sunday School made a substantial contribution to Hadjer, Turkey United Orphanage.[55]

The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite was more conservative than either the Mennonite Brethren in Christ or the Old Mennonites. In fact, they had broken away from the Old Mennonites in 1857 because of the liberalism evident in this group.[56] Holdeman, the leader, insisted on a strict discipline, the use of shunning and avoidance, severe conservatism in dress, and the wearing of beards by the men.[57] Unlike the Mennonite Brethren in Christ the Holdemanites of Linden showed little interest in evangelism. With the latter group the "stillen-im-lande"[58] attitude still predominated. Whereas the Old

---

53. Gospel Banner, Nov. 1, 1885

54. Didsbury Pioneer, Oct. 11, 1907.

55. Ibid., June 2, 1909.

56. John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, Scottdale, Pa., 1949, p. 108.

57. Ibid., p. 125.

58. The Anabaptists and later the Mennonites were originally intensely evangelistic, literally accepting the great commission of Christ, namely, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, etc." This active program of evangelism was instituted also because the Anabaptists controlled no political units as the Reformers did, and therefore had to win others. The continual persecutions, however, gradually intimidated the once flaming Anabaptist evangels. These became the "stillen-im-lande" (the still ones in the land), content to keep to themselves, if only they were allowed an existence. In some areas, such as the Danzig area, and later Russia, the Mennonites were not permitted to proselytize. Often state authorities forbade public evidence of the presence of Mennonites as a religious group or the holding of public services or even the erection of church buildings. Thus the spirit of evangelism was extinguished.

Mennonites of Carstairs did in subsequent years attract some non-Mennonites from the district into its membership[59] such was not the experience of the Holdemanites at Linden. In part this may be attributed to their emphasis on separation from the world and to the compactness of the colony at Linden in contrast to the more scattered nature of the Old Mennonite settlements at Carstairs and Didsbury. The Holdemanites were also more extremely pietistic than the Old Mennonites and used only the German which acted as a barrier between them and the non-Mennonite community.

Both the Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ had accepted the Sunday School and the prayer meeting[60] before coming west but the Holdemanites had not.[61] The Sunday School afforded the two groups an opportunity to increase their teaching and indoctrination program, concentrating especially on the youth. The prayer meeting provided members with an opportunity for the expression of emotions while the testimony meeting which had been adopted by only the Mennonite Brethren in Christ helped to bind the members

---

59. Information obtained from the church records of Carstairs Old Mennonite church.

60. Minutes of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, May 28, 1847.

61. Solomon Eby reportedly attended Sunday School in Berlin, Ontario, as early as 1847. The Moyer Church, later Vineland, held Sunday School since 1848. Other Old Mennonite churches of Ontario had Sunday School as early as 1860. Prayer meetings were permitted "for all true and prayerful persons who call upon God in spirit and truth". This position was accepted by the Annual Conference of the Mennonite Church held at Markham, May 28, 1847. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ used the Sunday School and prayer meeting immediately after the organization of the church. Minutes of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, May 28, 1847; J. B. Cressman, "History of the First Mennonite Church of Kitchener, Ontario," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1939, p. 15.

closer together in mutual fellowship and understanding. The Old Mennonites considered testimony meetings and hymn singing to be worldly innovations. Both the Sunday School and prayer meeting appeared to be instances of using the methods of other Protestant bodies in order to protect one's own religion against outside influences.

Whereas both the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Old Mennonites had accepted the use of the English language before any of their number came to Alberta, the Holdemanites of Linden continued the use of German.[62] For the first two the use of English facilitated contacts with the non-Mennonite elements of society. For the Holdemanites of Linden the use of German constituted a barrier against outside influence. Holdeman encouraged the use of German by his extensive writing in the German language, particularly in the Church's official periodical Botschafter der Wahrheit (Messenger of Truth) of which he was editor from June, 1897 until his death in 1900. For many years Holdemanites of Alberta read only the German literature.

When after 1900, other religious denominations erected churches in Didsbury and district, the Mennonites appeared quite ready to co-

---

62. Already in 1850 ministers from Virginia and other states who visited the Old Mennonite churches of Ontario frequently preached in English. Jacob Swartz who died in 1866, used English freely in Haldimand county. Another minister who served the Old Mennonites of Welland County after 1875 used only English. Similarly the churches which united in 1875 to form the Mennonite Brethren in Christ used English in their religious services even before amalgamation. When members of these religious bodies came west the use of English presented no problems.

operate with them. The fact that by 1907 there were Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Church of England ministers in the Didsbury area engendered no apparent concern among the Mennonites that their faith might thus be weakened.[63] To the contrary, when on Sunday, February 23, 1908 the Methodists were ready to open their new church, Mennonite leaders incurred no disfavor among their members by joining with the Presbyterians and Baptists in cancelling all their services thus giving everyone an opportunity to honor the event.[64] The Mennonite Brethren in Christ even went so far as to make their church available to Captain Thompson of the Salvation Army of Guelph, Ontario for a series of meetings.[65] The same spirit of mutual interest in religious matters prompted the joint Sunday School Convention held at Didsbury in December of 1908. At this convention, attended by members of all churches in the area, the Rosebud Sunday School Association was organized with four Mennonites elected to its Board of Directors.[66] In view of the traditional emphasis on purity of life it was not surprising that Mennonites actively supported the Women's Christian Temperance Union.[67] That they participated in the evangelistic efforts of the Moody Bible Institute representatives,[68] sent delegates to the Christian Workers' Convention of 1911,[69] and generally contributed so

---

63. Didsbury Pioneer, Sept. 13, 1907; Oct. 11, 1907; Oct. 25, 1907.
64. Ibid., Feb. 28, 1908
65. Ibid. Mar. 27, 1908.
66. Ibid., Dec. 18, 1908; July 27, 1910.
67. Ibid., Nov. 8, 1911
68. Ibid., April 7, 1909.
69. Ibid., Dec. 6, 1911

extensively to the religious affairs of the community was certainly an indication of a significant departure from the traditional "stillen-im-Lande" attitude.[70]

Contrary to the traditional tenets of their faith some Mennonites joined lodges in an effort to strengthen their ties with non-Mennonite business associates. Such membership in secret orders was expressly forbidden by the Dordrecht Confession on the ground that these were oath bound fraternities.[71] No doubt the pioneer environment which accentuated the spirit of liberty and individualism, as well as the desire to retain a position of leadership and acceptance in an evolving community led to such a deviation from one of the principles of the Mennonite faith. This was the case both at Didsbury and Carstairs. A number of Mennonites of the Didsbury area, including some General Conference Mennonites, became members of the King Hiram Lodge, of which, J. E. Stauffer, a member of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, was for many years the secretary.[72] At Carstairs the membership role of the Masonic Lodge included some Old Mennonites who were also members in good standing at the local church.[73]

Mennonite association with the different religious groups is indicative of the degree to which Mennonites had adapted to American society before coming west. Instead of seeking to preserve their re-

---

70. See page 40 above.

71. The Complete Works of Menno Simons, Elkhart, Indiana, 1871, Vol. II, pp. 410, 412. Scriptures used to substantiate this opposition to oaths and secret orders are John 18:19,20 and II Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

72. Didsbury Pioneer, March 15, 1911; Jan.2, 1913 and subsequent issues.

73. Ibid., Sept. 4, 1908.

ligion through isolation from the world, church leaders in the Old Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren in Christ groups advocated adjustment to the larger community and the use of a dynamic church extension program. In the Didsbury area Mennonites were both the first settlers and the dominant religious group. Consequently they assumed the leadership in both secular and religious affairs in the district. When non-Mennonites entered the vicinity they had only the Mennonites to look to for direction in religious matters. This service Mennonite church leaders were glad to render until the different denominations sent ministers into the community. Thereafter contacts with the different religious bodies continued, manifested in various cooperative endeavors. In part this was prompted also by the pioneer conditions which confronted all settlers and engendered a sympathetic understanding of the problems of others and a readiness to help those in need. No doubt there existed also the hope, expecially among the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, of winning some converts to their faith.

In educational as in religious matters Mennonites contributed significantly. The three groups, namely the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, and the Old Mennonites recognized the need for education. Having come from Ontario and the United States of America they were accustomed to either American state schools or to the Ontario provincial schools. Thus they set up schools as soon as possible especially in areas where they constituted the first settlers as at Didsbury. In this the Mennonite Brethren in Christ were the most progressive. As early as 1893 this group, under the influence of W. Weber, conducted grade school classes in the im-

migration hall.[74] Although Mennonite schools did not all use the same teaching methods or program of studies, they all emphasized religious instruction. While the Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ used only English in their schools, the Holdemanites conducted their classes in German.

As the number of settlers increased several one-room schools were erected in the vicinity of Didsbury. The first such school to operate in the town was built in 1903. Just as the first teachers in the area were Mennonites, so were the members of the first school board with N. E. Eby as secretary treasurer and Weber and Shantz as trustees. Although Dr. Gaddes, a non-Mennonite, became chairman of the school board in 1908,[75] Mennonite representation on the board remained relatively strong up to the time of the first world war.[76]

Mennonites did not limit their interest in education to the elementary school level. While some of their young people attended the agricultural school at Olds, others went to Red Deer for their high school education. A large percentage of the latter came from families where the parents had left farming for some business enterprise in Didsbury. Some came from large families where the business

---

74. For some years he had ten pupils between the ages of six and ten. Parents paid him at the rate of ten cents per day per pupil. This fee became quite burdensome to some of the pioneer farmers with large families. Weber relates an incident in this regard. Mr. O. Frank, a stone cutter, sent his three children to Mr. Weber for instruction but failed to pay the thirty cents per day for the service. He finally presented Weber with a finely cut grindstone in compensation. Information obtained from interview with old-time residents of Didsbury.

75. Didsbury Pioneer, Feb. 7, 1908.

76. Ibid., May 18, 1910, Dec. 7, 1910, Dec. 13, 1911, Nov. 18, 1914.

or farm was not large enough to keep everyone fully occupied. There was little evidence of any fear among the Mennonites that higher education would weaken their faith even when several of their number departed for Calgary, Edmonton, and Queen's University to obtain professional training.[77]

In non-agricultural occupations just as in religious and educational affairs, Mennonites were surprisingly active. They were the first to settle in the Didsbury area and some of their number entered various businesses and occupations in response to the demands of the community. Thus Rev. Detwiler of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ temporarily served as postmaster, adviser to newcomers, landguide, grocer, and lumber agent.[78] Similarly, Mr. Fehr, a member of the General Conference Mennonites opened a grocery store.[79] This establishment was soon supplemented by a grocery and dry goods store owned and operated by George Peters.[80]

A number of Mennonites had had considerable business experience before coming to Alberta. One of these was Cornie Hiebert who had managed a general merchandise store, an implement firm, a lumber yard and a grist-mill in Manitoba before migrating to Didsbury in 1900.[81] Here he once again engaged in a general merchandise, lumber and imple-

---

77. Didsbury Pioneer, Oct. 14, 1907; Jan. 11, 1911; May 24, 1911.

78. Weber, op. cit., p. 20

79. Didsbury Pioneer, Sep. 13, 1907.

80. Ibid., Sep. 20, 1907.

81. MacRae, op. cit., pp. 811-813.

ment business, to which he added a hardware department. By October of 1907 he had erected a 35,000 bushel elevator and after two years further extended his activities by joining the firm of Gaddes and Findlay Real Estate.[82]

A man with similar business acumen was Manasseh Weber who came to Didsbury from Ontario in 1894. He was acclaimed by the pioneers of his district when he invented a brush cutter with a working capacity of approximately fifteen acres per day and the power to cut trees as large as six inches in diameter. Weber also supplied Didsbury with a flour mill capable of a daily output of one hundred barrels, and an elevator with a capacity of fifty-five thousand barrels. He developed a new pancake, shortcake, and bran-muffin flour which was marketed under the trade name of "Rosebud". In company with several other men, Weber developed three thousand acres of land near Didsbury of which one thousand acres were used for dairying, feed and pasture and the remaining acres for the production of oats, wheat and barley.[83]

D. S. Shantz, encouraged by the activities of men like Weber, utilized his farm to establish a seed growing business. He began by placing eight bushels of fall wheat, four bushels of Genesee Giant and four of Golden Giant on display at the Eastern fairs. He later sold some to a person at Allentown, Pennsylvania, and received enquiries for seed wheat from places as distant as Batavia, New York.[84] In subsequent years this became a prosperous enterprise.

---

82. The Didsbury Pioneer reported a sale by this firm of 10,000 acres in addition to seven other farms. Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 19, 1910; Apr. 6, 1910.

83. MacRae, op. cit., pp. 816,817.

84. Didsbury Pioneer, Oct. 25, 1907.

When the influx of immigrants created new demands for goods and services Mennonites were quick to utilize the opportunity. In 1909, to capitalize on the need for lands and town lots, J. E. Stauffer, a member of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, entered into partnership with Sexsmith, a non-Mennonite. Together they established a new real estate firm.[85] During 1908 and in subsequent years Joe Stauffer assisted the Dominion Lands' Office at Calgary in placing land hungry immigrants. In 1909 H. H. Reimer, a Russo-German Mennonite, took over the Lone Pine Creamery.[86] The next year the Milton, Mayer, and Shantz Lumber Company was established.[87] Another group, also involving Mennonites, organized the Didsbury Implement Manufacturing Co. Ltd. with Joe Eby as the chief engineer.[88] An occupation which Mennonites, with their emphasis on temperance, were inclined to frown upon because of its association with a liquor bar, was assumed by J. B. Conrad who became manager of the Golden West Hotel.[89] Enterprises, generally more acceptable to Mennonites were undertaken by F. F. Siemens and H. A. Friesen who became agents for the Seymour Arm Fruit Lands, Ltd. of Nelson, B.C.,[89a] by the Gertz's who opened a tailoring shop,[90] by J. F. Friesen who accepted a position with Cushing Brothers of Calgary,[91] and By J. R. Good, who be-

---

85. Didsbury Pioneer, May 19, 1909.
86. Ibid., Dec. 15, 1909
87. Ibid., Jul. 13, 1910
88. Ibid., Nov. 1, 1907
89. Ibid., Jan. 11, 1911
89a. Ibid., Apr. 19, 1911
90. Ibid., Dec. 13, 1911
91. Ibid., Jan. 15, 1913.

came the manager of the Alberta Culvert Company.[92] Although the aforementioned do not represent all of the business activities of the Mennonites in Didsbury and vicinity, they do indicate the direction their interests were taking. It is evident from this that the arrival of non-Mennonites produced no decline in Mennonite control of business establishments. In fact, an increasing number of Mennonite farmers, lured by the prospects of easy profits, sold their farms and entered non-agricultural occupations. That this was contrary to their agrarian tradition seems scarcely to have been contemplated by Mennonite church leaders. They apparently did not feel that this might weaken their emphasis on simplicity of life. The view that participation rather than isolation would promote the Mennonite faith appears to have been accepted by many as justification for departure from some of the Mennonite traditions.

The same attitude was evident also in the Mennonite participation in civic affairs. They were, of course, the dominant group in the area, constituted the first settlers of the district and were not unaffected by the pioneer environment.[93] When the municipal district was organized in 1898 Elias Shantz took his place as overseer. Later, when the Mountain View Municipality was organized, Joe Stauffer, another member of the Old Mennonite church, was elected as secretary treasurer.[94] He was also appointed homestead inspector. As

---

92. Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 15, 1913.

93. Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History, New York, 1920.

94. Didsbury Pioneer, Sep. 18, 1908.

such it was his responsibility to ensure that no one was found "sleeping" on a homestead for six months while holding a job elsewhere.[95] D. S. Shantz served Didsbury and district for some years as Game Warden and Justice of the Peace, a job which Mennonites would generally tend to avoid because of their non-resistant position.[96] On September 27, 1906 with the incorporation of Didsbury as a town, the first town council was composed of J. E. Sexsmith as mayor, N. E. Eby as secretary treasurer and four other Mennonites as councillors.[97] The following year the number of Mennonites on the six member council was reduced to three, a ratio which was maintained with little variation during the pre-war period.[98]

Mennonite involvement in business enterprise assured them of a voice in the economic affairs of the community. When the Didsbury Board of Trade was organized three of the eight members on the board of directors were Mennonites. The most influential of these were C. Hiebert and J. E. Stauffer.[99] The latter was secretary of the board until 1911.[100] In a similar manner Mennonites were able to exercise a controlling influence in the Didsbury Agricultural Society[101] under the presidency of one of their

---

95. Didsbury Pioneer, Feb. 3, 1909.

96. Ibid., May 24, 1911

97. Ibid., Jan. 4, 1907.

98. Ibid., see issues for these years.

99. Ibid., Feb. 28, 1908.

100. For account of the life of J. E. Stauffer, see MacRae, op cit., pp. 904, 905.

101. Didsbury Pioneer, Dec. 4, 1908.

number a few years after its founding.[102]

A keen interest in the advancement of agriculture was expressed by men like Joseph Stauffer who in 1910 became secretary of the Olds branch of the United Farmers' Association,[103] and R. H. Hiebert who served as secretary for the Namaka branch of the U.F.A.[104] According to the Guide Stauffer, in the interests of the farmers of his area, wired Ottawa in 1911 endorsing the government's stand on reciprocity with the United States.[105] Both Hiebert and Stauffer did much to promote a cooperative effort among U.F.A. members[106] particularly in flour distribution and machine purchases.[107] Although it was intended that all these activities should contribute to the welfare of the whole district, it was also hoped that they would increase the prosperity of Mennonites and enable them to retain or even strengthen their position in the community despite the influx of non-Mennonites.

The Mennonites of the Didsbury, Carstairs and Tofield areas participated actively also in political affairs. The Holdemanites

---

102. Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 13, 1912.

103. Grain Growers' Guide, Dec. 14, 1910, p. 24

104. Ibid., Dec. 7, 1910, p. 33

105. Ibid., Apr. 26, 1911, p. 17

106. Ibid., Mar. 22, 1911, p. 19

107. Ibid., Mar. 22, 1911, p. 26.

of the Linden district were more reserved in this regard although most of them considered it their duty to exercise the franchise.

In the election of 1905 the people of Rosebud constituency elected the Conservative, Cornelius Hiebert,[111] in preference to the Liberal candidate, Dr. Michael Clarke. This appears more significant in face of the fact that only two Conservative candidates were elected in the province. Various explanations have been forwarded for the Rosebud election. The Calgary Herald stated that the people of Rosebud voted "like cattle for a government candidate", which was, of course, incorrect because Hiebert was the Conservative standard bearer. It was contended by some that the people of Rosebud voted Conservative because of the educational issue involved.[112] In this connection it is well to remember that the majority of the Mennonites in the Rosebud constituency had come from Ontario or the United States and were quite familiar with government controlled schools. It would appear that the people of Rosebud elected a Conservative be-

---

111. Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 13, 1905; Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, I, 1906, (Edmonton, 1907), p. 43; For a more complete discussion of the 1905 election see:- L. G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta, Toronto, 1959, pp. 21-33.

112. Some Conservatives demanded the elimination of the separate schools and no limitation on provincial powers in schools. Edmonton Bulletin, July 12, 1905; Sep. 23, 1905; Sep. 26, 1905; Canadian Annual Review, 1905, p. 237. The Liberals maintained that a religious sect, church or denomination should not control the schools. Schools both public and private should be controlled by the government of the new province. All schools should use provincial texts and courses of studies, should meet the same standards of efficiency and be subject to the same inspection. Religious instruction should be possible from 3.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. if the majority of trustees so desire and provided attendance be not compulsory. Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 14, 1905. There should be efficiency, equal opportunity to obtain a good primary education and wherever supported by taxation, the schools be subject to "direct and continuous supervision, regulation and control of the Provincial Department of Education". Edmonton Bulletin, Aug. 5, 1905.

cause the voters in the electoral district were predominantly Mennonites and the Conservative standard bearer was one of their number.[113] Furthermore, the election had to be fought on the basis of announced rather than applied policy, of proposal rather than performance.[114] In such a contest personalities stand above proposals and in Rosebud this was accentuated by the ethnic and religious identity of the candidate with a majority of the constituents.

During his term in office as an opposition member, Hiebert, with the support of Robertson, introduced a number of measures. He obtained adoption of a government subsidy of a quarter million dollars for the sugar beet industry and the continuation of the payment of coyote bounties.[115] He advocated government ownership of the railway and the construction of railways northward to connect with the northern waterways timber areas and mineral beds of the province.[116] He also received a promise that the government would provide free tolls to rural telephones connected with towns within twenty miles.[117] Through his influence Didsbury received a grant of $1000 for a court house to be built within two years.[118] Hiebert advocated the prohibi-

---

113. Edmonton Bulletin, Nov. 17, 1905.

114. Ibid., Sep. 7, 1905.

115. Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 3, 1909; Statutes of Alberta, 1909, cap. 23; Morning Albertan, Feb. 11, 1909.

116. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, Mar. 15 to May 9, 1906, p. 46; Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 22, 1909; Mar. 3, 1909; Morning Albertan, Feb. 11, 1909; Edmonton Bulletin, Apr. 27, 1906; Jan. 1, 1908. Government ownership and control had long been a basic policy among some Conservatives (in federal affairs). For a scholarly treatment of the Alberta and Waterways railway, 1909-10 see:-Thomas, op. cit., pp. 58-94.

117. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, 1906, p. 33; Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 3, 1909; Morning Albertan Feb. 11, 1909.

118. Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 3, 1909.

tion of the sale of liquor except for medicinal, scientific and industrial purposes[119] and subsequently, that liquor be sold through government owned and operated liquor dispensaries.[120] In both instances his motion was defeated but he did manage to get the closing time for hotel liquor bars changed from 11.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.[121] Other proposals of lesser significance were such as the Hiebert-Robertson bill stipulating that a flag be flown over every school, a Hansard be printed, that rural districts be enabled to legislate for their own improvements and that a civil service law be provided for Alberta.[122]

At the close of his first term of office, Hiebert pronounced himself an Independent candidate for the next election. He lamented the "inconsistency of members who felt that a certain thing was right and then allowed themselves to be whipped into line by party leaders".[123] Hiebert explained that the bitter enmities of party strife and opposition to government policy just for the sake of opposition served only to hamper development. As an Independent he would be able to maintain the privilege of criticism, not being under compulsion to label as "bad" everything that the majority party enacted. He maintained that in many respects the Liberal ad-

---

119. Edmonton Bulletin, Jan. 24, 1908.

120. Ibid., Feb. 25, 1908; Feb. 27, 1908.

121. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, Jan. 23, 1906, pp. 18, 26, 52, 68; Didsbury Pioneer, Feb. 7, 1908, Feb. 28, 1908.

122. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, 1906, pp. 41, 72; Morning Albertan, Feb. 11, 1909.

123. Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 3, 1909.

ministration had done good work.[124]

During the election of 1909 the Liberal candidate, J. E. Stauffer, a member of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, was elected by a large majority.[125] Both the Conservative and Independent candidates, Scarlet and Hiebert respectively, lost their deposits.[126] Stauffer's victory may be attributed to several factors. He was the Liberal candidate and the Rutherford government had a good record of achievement whereas the Conservative policies were as yet untried. Even Hiebert, the former Conservative representative, had told his constituents that the Liberal administration had accomplished much that was praiseworthy. Furthermore, Stauffer was a member of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and many of his friends and relatives were members of the Old Mennonite church. Hiebert, on the other hand, was one of the Russian Mennonites of whom there were relatively few in the area when compared with the much larger number of Mennonite Brethren in Christ and Old Mennonites. Didsbury constituents therefore had two Mennonites running for election and of these Stauffer was associated with the predominant Mennonite church group. Stauffer had, of course, been very active in the economic, secular and political affairs in the area.

During his term of office Stauffer made some contributions worthy of notice. He served on the standing railway committee and

---

124. Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 3, 1909; Morning Albertan, Feb. 11, 1909; Feb. 24, 1909; Mar. 3, 1909; Mar. 4, 1909; Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 2, 1909; Feb. 24, 1909; Mar. 6, 1909.

125. Didsbury Pioneer, Mar. 24, 1909; Morning Albertan, Mar. 22, 1909.

126. Edmonton Bulletin, Mar. 23, 1909; Mar. 24, 1909.

at one point sent a telegram assuring the government of his support in the Alberta and Great Waterways issue.[127] In his election appeal Stauffer drew attention to government accomplishments which he had actively supported. These included the construction of 90 bridges and 400 pole miles of telephones and the installation of four ferries. The government had also incorporated the Alberta Farmers' Cooperative Elevator, Co. Ltd.,[128] passed the Farm Machinery Act[129] protecting farmers from rapacious implement corporations, and placed direct legislation in the hands of the people.[130] Stauffer made mention also of the Consolidated Schools Act and the imposition of a single tax in municipalities.[131] In the election of 1913 Stauffer again won over Sexsmith, his Conservative opponent.[132]

As in religious, civic and political affairs, so in the social life of the community the Mennonite groups of Didsbury and district contributed significantly. The Didsbury Silver Band for long under the direction of Albert Weber, a Mennonite Brethren in Christ, enjoyed the active support of the Mennonites. Over a period of years half the band members and four of the six member band committee were Mennonites.[133] Similarly Mennonites served on the football,[134] ten-

---

127. Didsbury Pioneer, Feb. 16, 1910; For news coverage of the Railways issue see:-Edmonton Bulletin, 1909-1910, particularly Mar. 24, Sep. 30, Nov. 1, Nov. 11, Dec. 22, 1909, Jan. 6, Feb. 12, Feb. 15, Feb. 17, Feb. 22, Feb. 23, Feb. 24, Feb. 26, Mar. 2, 1910.

128. Statutes of Alberta, 1913, Cap. 13;

129. Ibid., 1913, Cap. 15.

130. Ibid., 1913, Cap. 19; Canadian Annual Review, 1913, p. 553; Edmonton Bulletin, Feb. 10, 1912; Mar. 12, 1913.

131. Ibid., Mar. 12, 1913; Statutes of Alberta, 1913, Cap. 19.

132. Didsbury Pioneer, Apr. 9, 1913.

133. Ibid., Sep. 13, 1907; Dec. 7, 1910; Feb. 18, 1914; and issues ff.

134. Ibid., May 22, 1908 and Spring and Fall issues.

nis,[135] hockey,[136] and curling[137] clubs and participated in contests at the annual town and country fairs and figured quite prominently among the prize winners listed by the local paper.[138] Reports in the Pioneer also revealed that Mennonites often joined non-Mennonites from the district on extended hunting and fishing trips.[139]

In the Tofield and Linden areas Mennonites kept to their agricultural undertakings and did not enter into business, civic or social affairs of the district.[140] Prior to 1943 Sam Stauffer, the agent for the International Harvestor Company, was the only Mennonite businessman in Tofield. He held the agency from 1930 to 1941. By 1960 only three more Mennonites had moved into town, of whom one had opened a blacksmith shop in 1943, another had taken on the Cockshutt agency in 1952 and a year later a third entered the welding trade.[141] This limited departure from the agricultural tradition can be partially explained on the ground that both groups were more conservative and isolationist than the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. In the Didsbury area where the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and Old

---

135. Didsbury Pioneer, Apr. 21, 1909.

136. Ibid., Nov. 2, 1910 and other winter issues.

137. Ibid., Jan. 19, 1910; May 24, 1911 and winter issues.

138. Ibid., Jul. 27, 1910 and other summer issues.

139. Ibid., Sep. 8, 1909, and other summer, fall and winter issues.

140. Correspondence with the following:-Rev. P. J. Warkentin, Tofield, Apr. 3, 1959; Rev. J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, June 18, 1959; Rev. John Neufeld, Tofield, Apr. 6, 1959; J. B. Francis, Tofield, Feb. 20, 1962; P. I. Thiessen, Crooked Creek, Eddie Boese, Linden, June 20, 1959.

141. List of businessmen and civic officials prepared in cooperation with the Tofield Librarian.

Mennonites lived in close proximity and where a number of the most prominent families included members of both groups, the conservatism of the Old Mennonites was somewhat weakened. The Tofield and Linden groups experienced no such progressive influences. Furthermore, in the Tofield area the Mennonites arrived after the town had already been established. The settlers' necessities of life were therefore immediately satisfied by existing business concerns. There was no pressure upon Mennonites to enter non-agricultural occupations as was the case in the Didsbury area. No doubt the affiliation of some 75 Amish families with the Old Mennonite congregation at Tofield added a more conservative element to that church group.[142] The Linden Holdemanites were more intensely pietistic and isolationist. They had migrated as a group and were able during the first years through cooperative effort to establish a degree of self-sufficiency which made a business center in the immediate vicinity less essential.

Because of the transient nature of many settlers some religious groups encountered difficulties establishing their churches. In many instances a church in a new settlement was scarcely established before a number of families would move out and leave the congregation too weak to continue. Some settlers drifted back east, others to the United States and still others to different parts of Alberta. From this Mennonites stood to gain because they were less prone to emigrate and leave a struggling church behind. Many had been prosperous farmers in Eastern Canada or the United States and

---

142. Correspondence with Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, June 18, 1959.

had the pioneering experiences of their forefathers to draw upon. Kinship ties also helped to bind a settlement of Mennonites together. Remaining in a locality after others moved out strengthened the Mennonite settlement because it enabled Mennonite farmers to buy up the land previously held by non-Mennonites. Frequent migration among non-Mennonites also meant that Mennonites could longer retain a dominant influence in a community as was the case in the Didsbury district.

A number of factors promoted the mobility of non-Mennonite pioneers. Many who immigrated into Alberta between 1904 and 1910 enjoyed adequate rainfall and converted ranches into wheat farms.[143] With the succession of bad years after 1910 numerous farms were abandoned.[144] Where there was ample moisture farmers faced hail, rust and frost. With the drought in southern Alberta came grasshoppers and soil drifting. Although a large number of settlers had come west with the advantage of capital and experience many returned to the United States even before 1913. Among the reasons given for leaving Canada were the bad years and the high cost of agricultural equipment. It was reported that farmers paid about 20 percent more for farm machinery than United States farmers and received about 10 percent less for their produce.[145] Some returned with the profits

---

143. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1905, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 78.

144. W. A. Mackintosh, Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Setting, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, I, Toronto, 1934, pp. 124-130.

145. J. H. Haslam, "Why Settlers Leave", Grain Growers' Guide, August 30, 1916, pp. 19,20.

made by land speculation.[146] Basically, many may have left because the single crop economy of the Canadian West was extremely vulnerable. It depended upon imported capital for its development and upon a world market for the sale of its staple. The deflation of 1913 was produced by a drop in wheat prices on the world market and the failure of British or American investors to pour further capital into the Canadian West.[147]

In spite of discouraging circumstances immigration officials were able to report that immigrants from the United States and eastern Canada had the lowest percentage of deportees of all nationalities entering Canada.[148]

According to reports in the Didsbury Pioneer the number of settlers leaving the area was not very great although the number pulling up stakes was considerably greater for non-Mennonites than for Mennonites. In the Didsbury area, where Mennonites constituted the predominant element, more than three of every four families who left the district between 1906 and 1914 were non-Mennonites.[149] A substantial number of the Mennonite families that migrated were affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. This group through its contact with Methodists in eastern Canada had adopted a policy of intense evangelism, especially among non-Mennonites. Families

---

146. John Wilson, "Experiences of a Homesteader", Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 1, 1913, p. 3.

147. Haslam, op. cit.; Factors that caused farmers to leave Alberta and other prairie provinces were discussed in the following issues of the Grain Growers' Guide:-Jul.17, 1912, p.8; Jan.7, 1914, p.5; Dec.29, 1915, p. 19; Apr. 25, 1923, p.11.

148. Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1908, Sessional Paper 25, pt. 2, p. 135.

149. See issues of the Didsbury Pioneer for the years 1907-1919.

were therefore encouraged, as soon as possible, to move in small numbers to new districts for the purpose of establishing a church in such areas. Some Mennonite families left the Didsbury district to join their brethren in Saskatchewan or British Columbia. Rarely was a Mennonite family forced off a farm for economic reasons although two or three mortgage sales were reported. Migrations were usually prompted by religious or ethnic motives.

While only a small number of Old Mennonites left the area there appears to have been no migration from the rather compact colony of Holdemanites at Linden. This can be accounted for by the relatively strong religious and ethnic ties among them. Religious conservatism and compact settlement did much to keep the Holdemanites of Linden and the Old Mennonites of Tofield from migrating. Readiness to help fellow Mennonites in any one settlement added to their ability to withstand economic stress. Assisting brethren in need was one of the basic and traditional tenets of the Mennonite faith.[150] A more prosperous settlement in one part of the prairies would through the church agencies give economic assistance to another group experiencing economic difficulties.[151]

---

150. J. Winfield Fretz, "Mutual Aid Among the Mennonites", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Jan., 1939, pp. 28-59; July, 1939, pp. 187-209.

151. M. Weber, Such was Life, Calgary, 1956, passim; correspondence and interviews with church leaders in the Tofield and Didsbury districts.

CHAPTER TWO

World War I and its Implications for the Mennonites of Alberta, 1914-1922.

In 1914, with the beginning of hostilities in Europe, Alberta experienced a new phase in the course of her development. Mennonites, like everyone else, faced new challenges in economic, social and religious affairs.

During the war years there was an unprecedented expansion in the production of wheat and other agricultural produce. This came in response to the emphasis by allied governments on breadstuffs as the "only diet which sufficed in isolation and was therefore indispensible".[1] Thus western Canadian acreage increased by approximately 80 percent from 1913 to 1919 while wheat exports more than tripled during this period.[2] Later, such expansion proved disastrous in a time of falling demand and economic distress.

The increased production was accomplished despite serious difficulties. Nature was not always kind. The bumper years of 1915 to 1917 were followed by low yields in 1918 and 1919.[3] Although this misfortune was partly offset by higher agricultural prices[4] the market slump became evident in 1920[5] and deepened into

---

1. First Report of the Royal Commission on Wheat Supplies, 1921, p. 9 quoted by Mitchell W. Sharp, "Allied Wheat Buying in Relationship to Canadian Marketing Policy, 1914-18", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, Aug., 1940, p. 372.

2. Canada:Report of the Royal Commission on Dominion Provincial Relations, 1867-1939, 1, pp. 90-92.

3. Canada Year Book, 1927, p. 227

4. Canadian Annual Review, 1918, p. 715ff.; Canada Year Book, 1921, p. 227.

5. Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1920, p. 11.

the depression of 1921.[6]

In response to high prices, war time demands,[7] and prospects of future sale[8] many farmers purchased more land at inflated prices, thereby increasing the burden of debt.[9] To this was added the critical shortage of labor,[10] the high prices of machinery and the increased freight rates which followed the abrogation of the Crow's Nest Pass agreement.[11] Western agriculture also complained of excessive mortgage and bank interest, high cost of goods due to a faulty credit system, and the protective tariff.[12]

Although Mennonites were subjected to these same conditions of economic stress, they were not as seriously affected by them as were most non-Mennonites. They had become good farmers through centuries of experience. Persecution had driven them out of populated centers on to hillsides, swampy terrain and generally more unproductive lands. To make such soils productive, Mennonites had adopted new farming methods. They were among the first in Europe to develop new ways of making land fertile, of feeding and improving livestock, and of developing new varieties of grains. This agrarian

---

6. Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1921, pp. 8,9.

7. Grain Growers' Guide, Sep. 2, 1914, pp. 5,6.

8. Ibid., Feb. 9, 1916, pp. 6,8.

9. Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1914, p. 261; 1916, p. 694.

10. Alberta was reported to have had a higher percentage of men in the armed forces than any other province. Grain Growers' Guide, Mar. 11, 1914; Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 8, 1915; Canadian Annual Review, 1916, p. 743. Debates, House of Commons, Canada, 1919,I, 258.

11. Manitoba Free Press, June 26, 1917, June 29, 1917; Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 2, 1918, p. 5.

12. Manitoba Free Press, Mar. 7, 1917. Premier A. L. Sifton of Alberta advocated reform of the financial system in the province. He suggested the incorporation of hundreds of small agricultural banks throughout the West. Canadian Annual Review, 1915, p. 690; 1916, p. 728.

tradition was perpetuated in America and Eastern Canada and again in the Canadian West.[13] Thus the Mennonites of Alberta were better able to withstand the period of economic difficulties than many other inhabitants of the same region.

Several other factors contributed to Mennonite success in spite of adverse economic conditions. Unlike many others, they had come west with adequate capital. In the Didsbury, Carstairs and Linden areas Mennonites had been the first pioneers and claimed most of the best land available. Few were in debt and thus were not harassed by the excessive mortgage and bank interest rates. The practice of mutual aid among them helped tide some of the less fortunate through periods of financial difficulty. Furthermore, Mennonite farmers experienced no labor shortage because very few of their young men joined the armed forces.[14]

Of the Mennonites in the Tofield and Linden districts apparently none joined the armed services.[15] In Didsbury and district, largely under the influence of J. E. Stauffer, M.L.A., seventeen out of a total of 139 enlistees were Mennonites.[16] In view of the predominance of Mennonites in the area this number was very small. The Mennonites who enlisted were sons of families who were prominent in

---

13. Dr. J. Winfield Fretz, "Farming our Heritage", Mennonite Life, April, 1949, p. 3.

14. Lists of servicemen were obtained from the Didsbury, Carstairs, Olds, Tofield and Linden areas. These lists were compiled in cooperation with the Canadian Legion, local libraries, and World War I veterans of these areas.

15. Correspondence with Rev. P. J. Warkentin, Apr. 3, 1959, Rev. J. B. Stauffer, June 18, 1959, Rev. J. Neufeld, Apr. 6, 21, 1959--all of Tofield and Mr. E. Boese, Linden, June 20, 1959.

16. This list was obtained from R. G. Stevens, a veteran of World War I, who compiled the Honor roll in cooperation with the Didsbury Public Library and the Canadian Legion. The list was not guaranteed as complete.

business, civic and social affairs in the community and were therefore influenced by the opinions of the non-Mennonite element of society. Although only a few Mennonites entered the combatant forces, it appears to indicate a tendency to compromise even on a basic tenet of faith in order to gain public acceptance and still retain the Mennonite religion.

Generally Mennonites of Alberta prospered during the war years. They were able to expand their land holdings and to place many of their young men on farms. Prosperity brought a marked increase in the number of tractors and power machines on Mennonite farms. In the settlement at Didsbury, for instance, one Mennonite dealer sold in excess of fifty tractors and a comparable number of trucks and farm implements in 1916. During the same year a firm organized by Mennonites of the town began the manufacture of culverts and other construction materials. In the face of heavy demand Mennonite farmers substantially increased their herds and erected a dairy.[17]

A relatively small number of Mennonite farmers sold or lost their holdings during the recession following 1920. According to the Didsbury Pioneer there were 176 farm auction sales during the period 1917 to 1924. Many of these were forced sales due either to tax arrears or mortgage foreclosures. Of all the farms sold only 29 were Mennonite owned.[18] Only two of this number were sold be-

---

17. M. Weber, Such was Life, Calgary, 1956, pp. 46, 47. Information from old time residents and their personal records.

18. See issues of the Didsbury Pioneer, 1917 to 1924.

cause of pressure from mortgage companies. Of the Mennonite farmers who sold their holdings some were attracted by the possibilities in the Peace River area, a few returned to Ontario to join their relatives, while a small number migrated to the west coast. In the Tofield and Linden areas no farm sales were reported.[19]

Although Mennonites were generally quite prosperous many of them still sought the advantage to be derived from membership in the expanding farmers' organizations. The economic conditions led to a rapid growth of the grain growers' associations. By the end of 1918 membership in these associations reached one hundred thousand.[20] During the same year the Grain Growers' Guide reported a circulation of over forty thousand. Included in the membership of the farmers' organizations were a significant number of Mennonites, especially in the Didsbury and Carstairs areas.

This increased Mennonite interest in the U.F.A. and grain growers' associations was due to several factors. Mennonites had, of course, participated in these associations before the war.[21] Many of them felt that cooperation with an organization promoting agriculture was in accord with their religious principles and traditions. In addition they saw in membership the possibility of enhancing their economic wellbeing. A further incentive to participation was the program of expansion.

---

19. See issues of Tofield Standard and Carstairs News from 1917 to 1924.

20. Grain Growers' Guide, Oct., 1918.

21. Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 11, 1911; Grain Growers' Guide, Dec. 7, 1910, p. 33; Dec. 14, 1910, p. 24; Feb. 22, 1911, p. 26; Mar. 22, 1911, p. 19; Apr. 26, 1911, p. 17.

In the extension of U. F. A. activities some Mennonites occupied a leading position. One of these was Joseph Stauffer, who, as director of the U.F.A. for the Red Deer constituency, was very active in organizing new locals.[22] Among the new U.F.A. locals that were organized under Stauffer's direction were the Burnside, Eagle Hill and Blindman Valley locals, each of which included a sizeable Mennonite element.[23] The Burkholders, also Mennonites, were influential in promoting interest in the junior branches of the United Farmers in Western Alberta.[24] Among those listed as life-members of the U.F.A. were Mennonites such as C. W. Toews, originally from the Manitoba Mennonite Reserves,[25] and P. P. Dick, another one of the same group, who was elected president of the Didsbury U.F.A. local.[26] Mennonite influence in the farmers' organizations even aroused the interest of some of the more conservative Mennonites near Tofield.[27] The pietistic Holdemanites of Linden, however, showed little interest in these farmers' associations.

Mennonite participation in community affairs was not limited to their activities in these agricultural concerns. As in pre-war years, so during the war, the Didsbury and Carstairs Menno-

---

22. Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 30, 1918, p. 14; June 15, 1918, p. 11; Apr. 30, 1919, p. 10; Feb. 9, 1919, p. 10; Apr. 16, 1919, p. 10.

23. Ibid., Apr. 30, 1919, p. 10; Oct. 15, 1919, p. 12

24. Ibid., Oct. 22, 1919, p. 13.

25. Ibid., Apr. 23, 1919, p. 13.

26. Didsbury Pioneer, May 16, 1917.

27. Tofield Standard, June 15, 1918.

nite groups continued to show an active interest in matters of local and provincial interest. They even joined community functions designed to promote Canada's war effort. Thus, in 1914, Stauffer's appeal for Patriotic Fund contributions aroused a significant response among the Mennonites of the area.[28] A year later he was able to report that Didsbury came highest in southern Alberta in her Patriotic Fund contributions.[29] Mennonites also rendered valuable assistance in Victory Loan drives. One of the Old Mennonites of Didsbury even served on the Victory Loan Committee of that town. Similarly, the Red Cross Association received strong support among all groups of Mennonites. Cooperation among Mennonite and non-Mennonite ladies' groups made possible the organization of the local branch of the Red Cross in Didsbury and district.[30] On different occasions Mennonite ladies rendered valuable assistance at local Red Cross Association meetings.[31]

Participation in these and related activities was no doubt an expression of the Mennonite conviction that a Christian should help those in need. Such a concern for the welfare of others was enjoined by Menno Simons when he wrote:[32]

> They (Christians) show mercy and love as much as they can. They console the afflicted; assist the needy, clothe the naked; feed the hungry; and do not turn their face from the poor.

---

28. Didsbury Pioneer, Nov. 18, 1914; Jan. 13, 1915.

29. Ibid., Jan. 13, 1915.

30. Ibid., Jan. 13, 1915.

31. Ibid., May issues, 1917.

32. The Complete Works of Menno Simons, Elkhart, Indiana, 1871, Vol. II p. 83.

Concern for the wellbeing of others, accentuated by religious persecutions, was expressed by the Anabaptists and later by the Dutch Mennonites who in 1710 organized the Foundation for Foreign Relief.[33] This principle of love for one's fellowmen was expressed on numerous occasions by Mennonite groups in America.

The popular nationalist sentiment that got hold of the West may also have prompted Mennonites to have a part in Canada's war effort. Of the Mennonites who had come to Alberta before World War I all but the small General Conference Mennonite group near Didsbury could look back on a history of two centuries in America. The forefathers of many of the Alberta Mennonites had lived in eastern Canada for over a century. Apparently some of them had come to Canada in order "that they might continue to live under British laws",[34] others had come bearing the Loyalist label because their pacifism had been interpreted as sympathy toward the British, and still others had come in search of more land when, by 1800, the settlements in Pennsylvania had become overcrowded.[34a] Thus Mennonites could be expected to display as strong a nationalist sentiment as later immigrants, except, perhaps for the Anglo-Canadian element of society.

There was, of course, a rising popular opposition against everything German. Pacifism, especially where it was expressed by people of German ancestry such as the Mennonites, also aroused antagonism. Thus many Mennonites, in order to mitigate popular opposition, participated

---

33. W. J. Kühler, "Dutch Mennonite Relief Work in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Apr., 1943, pp.87-94

34. Mabel Dunham, The Trail of the Conestoga, Toronto, 1924. Quoted from the foreword by Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King.

34a. John Mitchell, The settlement of York County, pp. 41, 42 Dunham, op. cit., pp. 28, 135ff.

in community efforts designed to advance the war effort. A few Mennonites even went so far as to encourage their sons to join the armed forces. This manifested a desire on the part of the Mennonites to reduce popular resentment. An outstanding example of this was Lieutenant J. E. Stauffer, the M.L.A. for Didsbury, who early in 1916 went to Calgary to form a regiment.[35] No doubt his death at Vimy on April 10, 1917[35b] and the death of several other Mennonite youth helped to soften local antagonism aroused by the pacifist principles expressed by Mennonites generally. Later in 1920, D. C. Eby drew sympathetic popular response when he made a trip to the battlefields of Europe, including a visit to Vimy Ridge where he paid tribute to the dead.[36]

Despite the attempts by some to appease popular opinion many Mennonites aroused indignation by upholding their non-resistant principles and continuing the use of the German language. This was the case with the Holdemanites and the small group of General Conference Mennonites near Didsbury, and was true also of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba and its daughter colonies in Saskatchewan. The popular reaction against pacifism and German speech at a time when the war spirit became strong in the West, caused Mennonites some concern.

Anxiety was deepened by the fact that there existed a number of statutes respecting exemption from military service but not all these were applicable to every group of Mennonites in Canada. Some Mennonite groups therefore feared that with a government subjected to popular pressure, they might lose the privilege of exercising their non-resistant principles.

The earliest statute of Canada respecting exemption from mil-

---

35. Didsbury Pioneer, Jan. 26, 1916.

35a. Ibid., Apr. 25, 1917.

36. Ibid., Jan. 7, 1920.

itary service appears to be that of 1808.[37] This act summarized several laws for raising and training the Militia of the Province. It provided:[38]

> that the persons called Quakers, Mennonists and Tunkers, who from certain scruples of conscience decline bearing arms, shall not be compelled to serve in the said militia, but every person professing that he is one of the people called Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, and producing a certificate of being a Quaker, Mennonist, or Tunker, signed by the clerk of the meeting of such society or by any three or more of the people called Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, shall be excused and exempted from serving in the said militia; provided, nevertheless, that every such person or persons that shall or may be of the people called Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, from the age of sixteen to sixty shall on or before the first day of December in each and every year give his name and place of residence to the Treasurer of the District where he or they shall reside, and pay to such Treasurer to and for public uses of such District in time of peace the sum of twenty shillings, and in time of actual invasion or insurrection, or when any part of the Militia of that district shall be called out on active service the sum of five pounds,--

In 1839 another provision was enacted with similar requirements of identification and payment of fees.[39]

When the delegates from Russia came to America during the summer of 1873 to investigate the possibilities of migration into the new world one problem was the exemption from military service. A delegation consulted with the United States and Canadian govern-

---

37. Memo from Legislative Library, Toronto:-"In one volume which was published by the government at the time, and which contains statutes and laws of the British Parliament, of Quebec and the subsequent Province of Upper Canada (and including all Ordinances having the force of law), from 1716 to 1820, appears the first statute in which mention is made of the Mennonites and Tunkers, such Statute being one of George III, passed in 1808."

38. 1808-48 Geo. III, Chapter 1, being "An act to explain, amend and reduce to one Act the several Laws now in being for the raising and training of the Militia of the Province." Section 27, quoted in part. Quoted in full in L. J. Burkholder, Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, 1935. pp. 349, 350.

39. 1839-2 Victoria, Chap. 9, Section 52. Quoted in Ibid., pp. 351.

ments on this matter.[40] This desire for total military exemption was reflected in Paul Tschetler's diary[41] in which reference was made to a conversation with Heinrich Wiebe,[42] subsequently a resident of the Manitoba Mennonite Colony. Wiebe had expressed dislike for the United States, especially in view of the unlikelihood of obtaining total military exemption in that country.[43] According to Tschetler, Wiebe contended that land should not be the prime consideration because the search for freedom was the main reason for the pending migrations.[44] The same motive prompted the four Mennonite delegates to petition J. H. Pope, then Canada's Minister of

---

40. Report of the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominion of Canada for the Calendar year 1873 on Mennonite immigration-Canada, Sessional Papers, 1874, Vol. 6, from the Annual Reports of the Immigration Agents, pp. XI-XIV.

41. J. M. Hofer, (ed.) "The Diary of Paul Tschetler, 1873", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1931, pp. 112-127; Oct., 1931, pp. 198-220.

42. The Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion of Canada, 1891; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1892, Sessional Paper 7, p.222; These give the names of three Mennonites who were selected to visit North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas in 1891. Those chosen were Jacob Friesen, Heinrich Wiebe, and Peter Wiebe; Memo from the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

43. Wiebe's apprehension was later substantiated when some Hutterites, who had petitioned President Grant for similar exemption including independent control of education, were informed by the Secretary of State Hamilton Fish that their request could not be granted. Education was a state affair. Regarding military exemption the Hutterites were informed that although no war was expected within the next fifty years, there was "little likelihood that congress would find justification in freeing them from duties which are asked of other citizens" should a war occur. Letter of Sep.5, 1873 was quoted by J. M. Hofer in Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1931, p. 217. Regarding the Congressional debates on this matter see:- George Leibrandt, "The Emigration of the German Mennonites from Russia to the United States and Canada, 1873-1880:ii" Mennonite Quarterly Review, Jan. 1933, pp. 15ff.

44. Hofer, op. cit., p. 199.

Agriculture. In reply John Lowe, then Secretary in the Department of Agriculture, addressed a letter to them dated July 25, 1873, in which he explained the exemption privileges.[45]

> An entire exemption from military service is by law and Order-in-Council granted to the Denomination of Christians called Mennonites. ..... The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever, and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.

The letter expressed the basis upon which negotiations were begun.[46] In a letter of January, 1872, Elder Leonhard of Berdiansk presented the Mennonite position on non-resistance to the British Consul who referred the letter to the Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence. The reply made reference to section seventeen of the Act respecting the militia and defence of the Dominion of Canada of 1868.[47] This assured the Mennonites of exemption from military service but the concluding words of the section namely, "as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe", caused the Mennonites much concern. They interpreted

---

45. This letter is quoted in full in Appendix A, p. 270, below. Source:-Department of Agriculture Letters Sent, Vol. 7, 1873, pp. 167-169, in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

46. P. M. Friesen, Die Alt-evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschiste, Halbstadt, 1911, pp. 500f.

47. 1868 sub-section of Section 17 of the Act, 31 Victoria, Chapter 40:-Any person bearing a Certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonites or Tunkers, or any inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe. Quoted in Burkholder, op. cit., p. 352.

this to mean that the Governor held arbitrary powers in matters pertaining to military exemption. Accordingly, the Order-in-Council of September 25, 1875 explained:-

> That the intention of the Act in conferring upon the Governor-in-Council the power of making conditions and regulations was to enable the Government to provide, if necessary, for the registration of the exempted persons in such a manner as to prevent persons belonging to any other denomination than those specified in the section of the Act above quoted from avoiding military duty under false pretences. That the constitution does not confer upon the Governor General-in-Council any power to override or set aside, under any circumstances, the plain meaning of statute law, and he recommends that this explanation be conveyed to the Mennonites in Russia.

Section one of the Military Service Act dealt with the "Excepted" persons of whom no military duty was required. It included those excepted from military service by Order-in-Council of August 13, 1873 and by Order-in-Council of December 6, 1898.[48]

Section two of the Act referred to the "Exemptions" from military service. Of the six grounds for exemption, the last, involving conscientious objection to military service read as follows:-[49]

> That he conscientiously objects to the undertaking of combatant service, and is prohibited from so doing by the tenets and articles of faith, in effect on the sixth day of July, 1917, of any organized religious denomination existing and well organized in Canada at such date and to which he in good faith belongs.

Thus all of the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870's, who came from Russia, and their descendants enjoyed exemption privileges as a class[50] whereas all other Mennonite groups whose forefathers had

---

48. These Orders-in-Council referred to the privileges extended to the Russian Mennonite immigrants of 1873 and later who settled in Southern Manitoba.

49. The Military Service Act, 1917, Sec. 11, ss.(f). Quoted in Burkholder, op. cit., p. 353.

50. Report of the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominion of Canada for the Calendar year 1873 on Mennonite Immigration, Canada, Sessional Papers, 1874, Vol. 6, from the Annual Reports of the Immigration Agents, pp. XI-XIV.

come to America two centuries earlier came under the act of 1868 which emphasized exemption not of a class but of an individual who, from the doctrines of his religion is adverse to bearing arms. This meant that exemption had to be individually claimed, and that the burden of proof regarding the exemption claim rested on the claimant.[51] When, therefore, the Military Service Act was passed in 1917 the groups implicated were the Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and the Holdemanites.[52] These included those resident in Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as Ontario, but not those of Manitoba.

For these groups the federal government provided for the establishment of various local tribunals designed to hear claims of persons called for service.[53] Mennonite young men who applied for total exemption from service received consideration either as farmers or on account of religious belief. Some individuals and groups expressed indignation at the leniency of the tribunals,[54] and, when popular pressure produced the Man Power Bill, April, 1918, there was a reduction in the number of appeals granted.[55]

---

51. Militia Act of 1868, Chapter 40 Victoria, Section 17, Quoted in Burkholder, op. cit., p. 352.

52. An appeal was made on October 11, 1917 to the Government of Canada in Council. A delegation consisting of L.J. Burkholder, Moderator, Markham, Ontario, David Bergey, Secretary, New Dundee, Ontario, S.F. Coffman, Vineland, Ontario, Anson Groh, Petrolia, Ontario, handed the appeal to the Government. A copy of this appeal, outlining the position of the Mennonite Church on military service appears in Appendix B , p.275, below. Memo from Goshen College Archives, Goshen, Indiana.

53. Premier Borden issued a statement with regard to work for exemption tribunals, Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 21, 1917, p. 14.

54. Ibid., Nov. 24, 1917, p. 19; Dec. 1, 1917, p. 22.

55. Ibid., Dec. 6, 1917, p.9.

Mennonite anxiety increased with the mounting opposition to German and pacifist groups expressed by numerous individuals and associations. Political associations, the Great War Veterans' Association, the Army and Navy Veterans in Canada, the Orange lodges, and the Great War Next of Kin Association of Manitoba strongly advocated the disfranchisement of aliens.[56] These and other organizations supported the disfranchisement bill which was introduced into the House of Commons on May 31, 1917 by Colonel J. A. Currie, M.P.[57] Support for the measure was apparently occasioned by the belief that the groups to be disfranchised were pacifist and pro-German in their sympathies and were unlikely to assist in Canada's war effort. This view was also expressed in the Winnipeg Free Press on a number of occasions.[58]

Accordingly, on September 20, 1917 the Dominion Government, desirous of winning votes on the basis of its position favoring overseas conscription, passed the Dominion Elections Act.[59] Under subsection 154 of the War Time Election Act Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors were specifically named as being deprived of the right to vote. This, however, aroused no resentment among the Men-

---

56. File RLB1414 of the papers of Sir Robert Borden at the Public Archives of Canada contains correspondence and related material on the disfranchisement of aliens, 1917.

57. Debates, House of Commons, Canada, 1917, I. See also papers of Sir Robert Borden at the Public Archives of Canada.

58. Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 27, 1917, p.11; Dec. 1, 1917, p.7.

59. The statute disfranchised all Canadian residents of German origin as well as all conscientious objectors. Revised Statutes of Canada, 1917, Vol. I, Chapter 6, sec. 67.

nonite groups. In fact, the Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, the Holdemanites and the Amish had, in view of the popular reaction against them because of their German ancestry and their pacifism and in an endeavor to weaken this reaction, felt obligated to request disfranchisement. On July 14, 1917 the Mennonite bishops, Ezra L. Martin, M. S. Shantz, Tobias Martin and Urias Martin, had written to W. G. Weichel, M.P. as follows:-[60]

> It having come to our notice through the newspapers that certain religious sects who for various reasons object to take up arms or do any military duty whatever, are going to be exempt from doing so under the present Conscription bill and as we, the undersigned, representing a part of the Mennonite Church of Canada would respectfully ask through you, the Government of Canada, that under such conditions we think it only just and right that should there be a war time election, that all such bodies including ourselves would not have a vote in such election.

When, under continual pressure, the government passed the Man Power Bill, designed to supplement the Military Service Act, Mennonites objected because of the expressed intention to cancel former exemptions. Their fears were confirmed when some tribunals refused to honor former decisions of the Military Service Council, with the result that some young men were detained as prisoners and a few forced into military service. Appeals to the government brought an arrangement which required young men to report to district military headquarters whereupon they would be granted exemption from combatant service. All such persons were then granted "leave of absence without pay for duration of the war". This re-

---

60. Letter contained in File RLB1414 of the papers of Sir Robert Borden at the Public Archives of Canada.

quired all men of military age to report at regular intervals. During June of 1918 the government served notice to all commanding officers in the various districts to "grant leave" to a Mennonite young man upon presentation of credentials.[61] Thereupon a number of men were released from detention.

Like other minority groups, Mennonites sought to justify themselves in their pacifism. Their disfranchisement and the great demand for agricultural products gave them an occasion for self-justification. Many accepted the disfranchisement as sufficient price for their non-combatant position. With the heavy war time demand for agricultural produce many Mennonites found justification for keeping their sons at home on the farms. In this they were encouraged by some articles and editorials appearing in the Grain Growers' Guide, which raised a voice against the conscripting of farm labor[62] and urged farmers to help the war effort by increasing production.[63]

The Mennonite groups of Alberta like those of Ontario found further justification for their pacifism in their relief contributions. In 1918 they founded the Non-Resistant Relief Organization.[64] The government commended the effort and being

---

61. A copy of a sample certificate of Church Membership issued as evidence to military authorities appears in Appendix 'C p. 273, below.

62. Grain Growers' Guide, Mar. 11, 1914.

63. Ibid., Sep. 2, 1914.

64. M. C. Lehman, The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work:An Introduction, Akron, Pa., 1945; P. C. Hiebert, Feeding the Hungry, Scottdale, Pa., 1929, pp. 49,50.

unable to accept gifts for benevolent purposes recommended that the funds be placed with some existing charitable organizations doing relief work. During the war approximately $75,000 was contributed for the relief of war sufferers in Europe.[65] After 1919 donations were sent for famine relief work in China and Russia.[66]

Agitation against what were conceived of as pro-German and pacifist groups had its impact also on government immigration policies. Opposition mounted when conscientious objectors came to Canada from the United States, acquired land and claimed exemption from military service under Canadian laws. Accordingly the Prime Minister in 1919 declared that the exemption privileges were not intended for such immigrants.[67] In the summer of the same year an Order-in-Council stopped all immigration of Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors.[68] This course of action was explained as follows:-

> Owing to conditions prevailing as a result of war, a widespread feeling exists throughout Canada, and more particularly in Western Canada, that steps should be taken to prohibit the landing in Canada of immigrants deemed undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living and methods of holding property, and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their entry.

---

65. Distribution was made among the following:-the Merchant Sailors' Relief Organization furnishing relief for widows and children whose husbands and fathers were lost on torpedoed vessels; the Soldiers' Aid Commission for wounded and sick returned men; the Belgian Relief Fund; the Canadian Serbian Relief Committee.

66. "Report of Joint Meeting of the Mennonite Relief Committees, July 27, 1920", Mennonite Central Committee Minutes, 1920-1927.

67. Manitoba Free Press, Apr. 9, 1919. Reproduced by E. K. Francis, "Miscellaneous Documents concerning School and Military Service", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1953, p. 234f.

68. Order-in-Council, P.O. 1204, The Canada Gazette, June 14, 1919.

With the interruption of immigration by the war the additions to the Mennonites of Alberta during the decade following 1913 were very small. In fact the only new settlement of this period was the one established by some Old Mennonites who came to the Duchess area in 1917, just two years before the Dominion Government prohibited further Mennonite immigration. These settlers came from the counties of Cumberland and Snyder, Pennsylvania. The colony, situated in the dry belt, 120 miles east of Calgary, experienced considerable hardships until the Canadian Pacific Railway established an irrigation system from the Bassano Dam.

In the face of limited immigration and popular opposition the Mennonite groups of Alberta experienced no appreciable expansion during and immediately following the war. As already noted, the Old Mennonites established one new settlement as a result of immigration. The Holdemanites saw no additions to their group except that resulting from natural increase. Like the two groups just mentioned, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ experienced little or no expansion resulting from immigration. In contrast to the other two Mennonite bodies, however, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ sought to expand their membership by evangelism. In this they were not very successful. Although a work was begun in Castor, Alsask and Galahad, progress was slow in these and other centers where missions had been opened just prior to the war.[69]

Alvin Traub, the Alberta District Superintendent for the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, ascribed the lack of progress to

---

69. Correspondence with Rev. Alvin Traub of Didsbury who superintended the work in these areas.

several factors.[70] The Mennonite name, he maintained, hampered progress. This was so because the public associated it with pacifism. In addition, people failed to distinguish one Mennonite group from another. Thus non-Mennonites tended to ascribe the inconsistencies of any one group of Mennonites to them all. A further difficulty arose from the fact that the public continued to associate the Mennonite name with German. This tendency was accentuated by such groups as the Holdemanites who continued the use of the German language despite public resentment. For these reasons Traub for many years concentrated his efforts on getting conference support for a change of name for the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.[71]

Another major difficulty that confronted the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Old Mennonites was the lack of efficient men to assume responsibilities in directing the work and giving leadership to the people. Both groups had too long looked to Ontario as the greater center from which to draw men of leadership ability. With the advent of the war and consequent changes, these men were no

---

70. For a full discussion of the observations here made see:- Minutes of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference, convention held at Didsbury, 1919; A. Traub, "Address to the graduating class of Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, 1952", available at the Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury. Mannasseh Weber, "Manuscript on the Didsbury Settlement," Waterloo Historical Society, 1950. D. C. Eby's chapter, "The Canadian Northwest Conference" in J. A. Huffman, History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, 1920, pp. 137ff. Alvin Traub, "Manuscript on the early history of Canadian North West District," written for a ministerial convention, 1954. Can be seen at Library, Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

71. This was finally accomplished in 1947.

longer forthcoming. Both the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and Old Mennonites therefore saw the need for the establishment of Bible Schools in the West. Such schools would not only provide for the training of young men but would serve to hold the young people who, it was declared, were either becoming materialistic or were being drawn into Bible schools of other denominations, only to be subsequently lost to the Mennonites.

The war presented the first real instance in which a national objective helped to weld together the heterogeneous ethnic groups. Members of all ethnic groups were brought into training camps. People of every tongue mingled as never before, constantly faced by the national symbols. This helped produce a unity among the many national groups and especially among the fighting men. From this the German and Mennonite elements in Canada were largely exempt. While the war, in its emphasis on a national undertaking to preserve liberty, welded together the ethnic groups in the Canadian West, it left the Mennonites out and tended to hinder the process of assimilation.

CHAPTER THREE

The Coming of the Russländer, 1923-1929

With the rise of communism in Russia and the termination of hostilities in Europe the Canadian Mennonites faced the task of bringing a large number of their Russian brethren into Canada. This involved not only the problem of the admission of these foreigners and paying for the cost of transportation but also getting them established economically, socially and spiritually in a new country. An additional problem was that of the adjustment of these newcomers to their Canadian brethren who had lived in Canada for many years.

These Russian Mennonites were of Dutch and German background but had lived in Russia since the 1760's. They consisted of two groups, namely, the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference of Mennonites. As already indicated,[1] both these bodies were more progressive than the other Mennonite groups of Alberta, although the Mennonite Brethren were the more conservative of the 1920 immigrants.

These migrants of the 1920's or Russländer, as they came to be known among their Canadian brethren, had lived in an environment that was generally inferior to the standards attained by the Mennonite community. The position of the peasantry in the Tsarist empire was one of poverty although there was a slight improvement after 1861.[2] Personal serfdom was abolished and the gentry were compelled

---

1. See Introduction, pp. 16-18.

2. For a detailed discussion of Russia prior to 1915 see:-James Mavor, Economic History of Russia, London, 1926, Vol. I, pp.491-493,522ff. The author reviews the economic situation prior to 1860. Hans von Eckhardt, Russia, revised and supplemented by the author for the English edition, translated from German by Catherine A.Phillips, N. Y., 1933, pp. 233-244.

to sell half their lands to the peasants. For the land received by the peasants the state advanced the money to the country squires and in turn expected to recover it from the peasants by payments extending over forty-five years. Progress was slow, however, because the government did little to improve agricultural production, the country squires did not show much initiative, and no enlightened activity could be expected from illiterate peasants. Prior to the 1930's the Russian economy was predominantly agrarian with only 15% of the population engaged in industry, transport and trade. Until state-planned industrialization began under the Soviet government, the country had large reserves of unskilled manpower in the overpopulated countryside. This halted economic development, reduced almost to nothing any possibility of savings, kept the standards of living low and discouraged the introduction of more efficient techniques in the rural economy.

In contrast to this the Mennonites had by 1915 progressed beyond the level of Russian society. By this time the number of colonies had increased from two to forty-five located mainly in Southern Russia between the Crimea and the Caucasus, with a population of approximately 105,000.[3] This growth in the number of settlements can be accounted for by the wird tradition under which it was forbidden to divide the land that belonged to a farm or to

---

3. The statistics found in this paragraph are taken from:- Adolf Ehrt, Das Mennonitentum in Russland: Von Seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart, Langensalza-Berlin-Leipzig, 1932, pp. 85ff., 96. The author based these statistics on taxation records, particularly those records showing the taxation exacted for the maintenance of the forestry service. Also:-E.K. Francis, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia 1789-1914", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1951, pp. 173-182, 200.

sell any part of it. To provide for the increase in population Mennonites evolved a plan whereby the income from communal land was used to buy land for new colonization. This prevented the rise of a large poor and underprivileged class among the Russian Mennonites, although some social differentiation or stratification existed because of the emphasis on individual enterprise within each community. At the time of the Communist revolution Mennonites owned approximately 2.5 million acres of productive land. In addition there were 384 large estates owned by individual Mennonites, comprising 810,000 acres with an average of 2000 acres per estate. Within the colonies were sizeable industrial and commercial establishments. Thus, by 1918, the two largest colonies of Chortitza and Molotschna boasted 26 factories, 180 flour mills, 100 stores, 2 printing presses and 38 brick yards. Mennonites also owned and operated nine agricultural equipment manufacturing plants employing over 2000 workers. The output of these plants has been reckoned as high as 7% of Russia's total production of farm machinery. Accordingly it has been calculated that by 1910 only 71% of the Mennonites in Russia were agriculturists, while the remaining 29% were industrialists, merchants, skilled craftsmen and intellectuals.[4]

Several factors account for the limited measure of adjustment of the Mennonites to Russian society. It appears that a sect existing in an environment that is less advanced economically, education-

---

4. Ehrt, op. cit., pp. 85ff., 96; Francis, op. cit., pp. 173-182, 200.

ally and culturally will retain its uniqueness with pride. For this very reason the social system may become hostile and persecute the minority group. The fact that the Mennonites in Russia found themselves in a social order so completely different from their own in language, culture and religion also hindered assimilation. Nevertheless the relationship to Russian society would have been different had the Mennonites not lived in closed farming settlements. The cooperative colonization scheme of the Mennonites accounts for the fact that they mixed so little with their Russian neighbors, for no one was compelled to start out alone but was able to settle in large closed colonies. In addition the Mennonites were given complete freedom in matters of farming, language, education and government of the colonies.

The prosperous Mennonite farmers, the intellectuals, businessmen and industrialists were well aware of the importance of education as a prequisite to continued progress. Accordingly education was emphasized to the point where illiteracy among Mennonites was practically unknown, even though it was still very prevalent among the peasants of Russia.[5] As a result, by 1915 the Mennonite educational system comprised 450 elementary schools, 27 Zentralschulen,[6] 4 high schools

---

5. For a more detailed account of Mennonite education in Russia see:-Peter Braun, "Educational System of the Mennonite colonies in South Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1929, pp. 168-82; D. P. Enns, "Die Mennonitischen Schulen in Russland", Mennonite Yearbook, 1950.

6. Literally - centralized schools. These were roughly comparable to the Canadian senior high schools.

for girls, 2 teachers' colleges, 2 business colleges, and 1 theological seminary.[7] Anyone wishing to instruct in a Zentralschule would not only receive training at one of the Mennonite teachers' institutes, but would proceed to advanced Russian or even German or Polish academies of university rank.

In 1881 the Russian government assumed control of the parochial schools of all foreign colonists, placing them under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.[8] The new arrangement, however, still left the Mennonites substantially autonomous even after 1897, when instruction in the Russian language was made compulsory for all schools. The Ministry of Education proceeded cautiously, instituting changes gradually under the guidance of well-trained officials. Schools in Mennonite colonies were still staffed by their own teachers with the privilege of instructing in German and religion for a specified number of periods each day.[9] Thus, without arousing any undue feeling of compulsion or state intervention, the government sought to create in Mennonite youth an attachment to the Russian state.

In this attempt at Russianizing the Mennonites the government was thwarted by several developments. Many of the wealthier Mennonites sent their sons to the University of Dorpat where they

---

7. Die Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Russland während der Kriegs- und Revolutionsjahre, 1914-1920. Kommissions-Verlag der Mennonitischen Flüchtlingsfürsorge, 1921, p. 31.

8. Lethbridge Herald, March 15, 1930; Peter Braun, "Educational System of the Mennonite colonies in South Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1929, pp. 168-182; Enns, op. cit.,

9. J. J. Hildebrand, Chronologische Zeittafel, Winnipeg, 1945, p. 268.

were subjected to a predominantly German culture. These men often became the intellectual leaders in the Mennonite colonies. Thus, although trained in Russia to think of themselves as members of a great Russian nation, Mennonites were still subjected to German influence.

Despite considerable involvement with the state army, Mennonites were able to retain some autonomy within the Russian conscription system.[10] In Russia, with its large peasant population, conscription brought together the various elements of society, held before the populace the symbols of the state, and drilled Russian youth from all walks of life in loyalty to the state. It acted as a leveller of ethnic and regional diversities and helped to break down the localism of ethnic colonies within the state. Mennonites were able to avoid the full impact of these levelling tendencies by joining the Forestry Service[11] rather than the army. Although they were under Russian command, were scattered into all parts of Russia in larger or smaller groups, wore uniforms and served under military discipline, their daily contact was primarily with other Mennonites and in off hours they were under the influence of Mennonite officers and re-

---

10. Die Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Russland während der Kriegs- und Revolutionsjahre, 1914-1920, Germany, 1921, pp. 82-84; Frank C. Peters, "Non-Combatant Service Then and Now", Mennonite Life, Jan., 1955, p. 31.

11. The Forestry Service - each forestry unit was managed by a Mennonite Okonom, who was both chaplain and teacher of the Russian language. Forestry units - duties comprised logging, reforestation, road construction, work in state-owned saw mills, and guarding forests. For further information see:-Jacob Sudermann, "Origin of the Mennonite State Service in Russia, 1870-1880", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Jan, 1943, pp. 23-46; F. C. Peters, op. cit., pp. 31-35.

ligious leaders. While the Forestry Service furnished some contact with Russians it did much to strengthen the social ties among the Mennonite colonies. In fact the conscription system convinced Mennonites of the need for inter-colony cooperation and gave rise to a joint commission composed of representatives of the various Mennonite bodies in the different colonies. The activities of this commission, which involved caring for the economic, legal, social and religious needs of the men in service, did much to weld together the Mennonite colonies within the Russian state. Therefore, at the beginning of the First World War, the scattered Mennonite colonies comprised an ethnic system drawn together by common problems and by common religious, educational and cultural interests. These and subsequent experiences of the Mennonites in Russia enabled those of their number who later came to Canada to assume positions of leadership among their Canadian brethren and to introduce a new approach to the problem of preserving the Mennonite faith.[12]

As the war progressed the Russian government took stringent measures against any possible subversive activities by ethnic groups. No Germans in Russia were allowed to gather socially in homes or otherwise or to use the German language. The government passed laws expropriating the property of all inhabitants of Russia who had originally come from Germany, Austria, Bulgaria or Turkey.[12b]

Mennonites sought to avoid the loss of property by proving to the Russian government that they were of Dutch origin and had migrated to Rus-

---

12. Chapter 4, p. 133, below.

12b. Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 285; For a discussion of the treatment accorded to ethnic groups see:-N. L. Chirovsky, The Economic Factors in the growth of Russia, New York, 1957, pp. 107, 135-144.

sia from what had at that time been Polish territory.[13] It was not until January of 1917, after several large Mennonite estates had already been expropriated, that the Russian government heeded their pleas. The experience regarding both language and property seriously impaired the sentiments of loyalty which the government had so painstakingly sought to instil in the ethnic groups.[14]

With the November Revolution of 1917 the Mennonites experienced a brief reign of terror. The suffering inflicted was in many instances under the direction of former servants of wealthy Mennonites. Fortunately this murderous onslaught was cut short by the advance of the German army.[15]

That the Germans came as liberators, although their stay was but for half a year, deeply impressed the Mennonites. These liberators spoke the same language as the Mennonites, restored to them the lands previously taken from them by the government, and brought law and order. The German occupation army officers also organized and drilled a Self-Defence Corps (Selbstschutz) composed of German speaking people of South Russia. Many Mennonite youth joined this defence corps. As a result of this contact with the German forces Mennonites became more strongly attached to things German. When many of these Mennonites later came to Canada this attachment found expression in their attempts to preserve the German language and culture and at times it aroused popular antagonism.[15b]

---

13. Dr. Cornelius Krahn, "The Ethnic Origin of the Mennonites from Russia", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, pp. 45-48; B. H. Unruh, Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. and 19. Jahrhundert, Karlsruhe, 1955.

14. Dr. C. Krahn, "Some Social attitudes of the Mennonites of Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1935, pp. 165-177.

15. Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 292; Ehrt, op. cit., pp. 126-130.

15b. Chapter 4, p. 136, below.

The retreat of the German and Austrian armies left the Mennonites to carry on independently until the Communist troops assumed control in 1918. The following year a state of anarchy ensued in parts of the Ukraine during which armies of bandits made their appearance. The largest of these bands was led by Machnov, a former criminal who had in his youth been a herdsman on a Mennonite estate.[16] Machnov and his army of poor Russian peasants opposed the rightist parties and withstood the Communists because they were not sufficiently radical. Every property owner was considered an enemy of the working classes. They recognized only one verdict, that of execution.

This situation subjected the Mennonites to a severe test respecting non-resistance. With no one to stand in their defence many Mennonites joined the Selbstschutz. When the forces of Machnov and the Red Army advanced upon the Ukraine the Selbstschutz was forced to capitulate. Machnov succeeded in gaining control of Tavrida province. He was therefore in control of the one time rich Mennonite Moloschna colony against which he exercised his authority in bloody revenge.

Machnov's control was interrupted during the summer of 1919 by the White armies under General Denikin backed by the Allied forces. Later, in October of the same year, Machnov managed to cut through the defenses and completely liquidated several Mennonite villages. Only after December of 1920 when the Red Army finally obtained control was some degree of order and safety restored to the Mennonite villages.

By the spring of 1921 militant communism had led to economic bankruptcy and Lenin sought a solution to the difficulty by introduc-

---

16. Gerhard Lohrenz, Sagradowka, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, 1947, pp. 94-105; Hildebrand, op. cit., p. 294.

ing the "New Economic Policy" which was in essence a retreat from pure communism.[17] This gave Mennonites new courage to plan the creation of a strong Mennonite economic organization. These plans were thwarted, however, by a severe drought which destroyed the harvest of 1921 and brought on a famine. There were no reserves on hand because everything had been surrendered to the government previously. Through the cooperative efforts of the American Mennonite Relief Society and the American Relief Administration many were rescued from starvation.[18]

In 1922, after the severest part of the famine had been overcome, Mennonites once again worked for the creation of cooperatives.[19] On May 16, 1923 the Central Government in Moscow finally approved a constitution enabling Mennonites to establish the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union.[20] This union they rapidly broadened despite the opposition of local officials and finally achieved the organization of nineteen branch units with fifty six sub-branches and a membership representative of 5965 family farms. The work of the local bodies concerned itself chiefly with the production of pure seed and with stock breeding. They also promoted dairying with emphasis on the

---

17. Sidney Harcave, Russia: A History, New York, 1959, pp. 529-567.

18. P. C. Hiebert and O.O. Miller, Feeding the Hungry, Scottdale, Pa., 1929.

19. C. F. Klassen, "The Mennonites of Russia, 1917-1928", Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1932, pp. 71-76.

20. Known as the Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein.

manufacture of cheese. Brick cheese and Dutch cheese were produced in large quantities and placed on the market. Stations for cleaning grain and machine shops for the care of tractors were set up. The work of the association was recognized by government officers as thoroughly useful but its basic objectives soon came under close scrutiny.

Mennonites had attempted to build up agricultural as well as consumer cooperatives in such a fashion that they would act as a protection against Bolshevist influence which threatened to disintegrate the settlements. The continual efforts of the communists to bolshevize the Mennonite administrative organizations required a constant defensive struggle. Imported German communists from Germany, Austria and the border states, most of whom knew neither Russian conditions nor the Mennonites, were sent to the Mennonite settlements with orders to strengthen the revolution in the colonies. These men repeatedly accused the Mennonites of using the All Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union to nourish the illusion among their brethren that they had a right to their own cooperatives and to individual development. Communist agents also claimed that the same organization had always been a handicap in the program of sovietizing the Mennonite colonies. The result of these pressures was the final destruction of all Mennonite cooperative activities which had been designed to counteract communist influence and preserve the Mennonite religion and tradition.

These experiences convinced Mennonites that they would have to seek opportunities for an escape from the communists or face disintegration. The confiscation of property, bolshevization of the

peasants, the liquidation of the bourgeois, and the converting of Mennonite churches into schools for communist indoctrination proved to the Mennonites that no degree of adjustment or compromise would suffice to preserve their religion. Many of them therefore looked to Canada where large numbers of their brethren were prospering economically and were free to exercise their faith.

The possibility of the admission of these Mennonites into Canada was of course dependent upon the immigration policy of the Dominion government. Immediately following the war the federal government changed its immigration policy in view of prevailing conditions.[21] Thousands of returning soldiers had to be reabsorbed into civil life.[22] Overoptimism in the railway construction of pre-war years had resulted in excessive railway mileage. Consequently the government had to formulate immigration policies which would discourage further railway construction at least for a number of years. As a result the free land policy, which had attracted so many immigrants before the war, ceased to draw settlers because homestead lands were now so remote from railway lines. The government encouraged only those to enter Canada who were in position to purchase land and those who qualified for farm or household work. Other factors such as the high cost of transportaion, the depreciation of European currencies and the large number of veterans filling

---

21. J. B. Hedges, Building the Canadian West: The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway, New York, 1939, p. 358; David C. Corbett, Canada's Immigration Policy, Toronto, 1957, pp. 3-37.

22. Canada Year Book, 1930, p. 178.

job vacancies helped to reduce even further the number of immigrants. Thus, as shown in Table I,[23] the number entering Canada during the period 1919 to 1923 was small compared to the immigration figures of pre-war years.[24]

TABLE I

Immigration for the immediate pre- and post- war years.

Year	No. of Immigrants	Year	No. of Immigrants
1908	262,469	1919	57,702
1909	146,908	1920	117,336
1910	208,794	1921	148,477
1911	311,084	1922	89,999
1912	354,237	1923	72,887
1913	402,432		

By 1923 prosperity was returning, surplus labor had been absorbed, most war veterans had found employment and the views regarding immigration began to change.[25] Although the opposition of organized labor to immigration softened after 1923 its war on the misrepresentation abroad of opportunities in Canada continued during the 1920's.[26] Backing immigration were employers, railway and steamship companies.[27] The employers hoped to benefit from an abundant supply of labor at low wages while merchants favored an expanding

---

23. Table compiled by author from Canada Year Books.

24. Hedges, op. cit., pp. 357-362; Canada Year Book, 1930, p. 178.

25. Corbett, op. cit., pp. 142-148; Canadian Annual Review, 1922, p. 271; 1923, p. 168.

26. Corbett, op. cit., p. 6.

27. Ibid., pp. 11,12.

population to provide a strong domestic market for goods and services. Shipping companies did everything possible to promote immigration because they were looking for gains from transportation of migrants and the expansion of trade. Generally popular opinion again favored immigration but with the qualification that the newcomers should be of a type that could be readily assimilated. This meant that settlers from southern and eastern Europe, although desirable from a purely economic point of view, were not acceptable because they had proved to be difficult to assimilate.[28]

The new immigration policy announced by the government in 1923 was less selective but it still excluded those belonging to races considered difficult to assimilate and those physically, morally or industrially unfit. To gain admission a person would have to prove to immigration authorities that he had a job awaiting him in Canada or that he was financially able to provide for himself while seeking employment. It was evident, therefore, that immigration would increase with an upswing in economic prosperity and decrease during times of depression. Although the new policy was less restrictive than the one immediately following the war, Mennonites still envisaged difficulties in bringing their brethren to Canada, because they resided in Russia and were without financial resources.

Concomitant with the changes in the attitude of Canadians toward immigration the C.P.R. embarked upon a vigorous immigration

---

28. Canada Year Book, 1930, p. 165.

policy. The company worked out several special schemes in collaboration with the Canadian and British governments, designed to encourage immigration from the United Kingdom.[29] In 1923 the C.P.R. established the Farm Labor Service bureau which functioned as an agency for the placement of agricultural immigrants, and enabled the company to guarantee positions for both single and married agricultural workers.[30] The Canadian Pacific also cooperated with local colonization boards composed of businessmen, professionals and farmers and usually associated with local Boards of Trade. These boards gathered information on the nature and prices of available lands, accepted requests for farm laborers and in many instances provided supervision and after-care of immigrants.

In addition to these activities the Canadian Pacific promoted immigration through the Canadian Colonization Association. This organization had been established in 1920 by a group of men with the object of stimulating, on a public spirited basis, the colonization of privately held lands in western Canada. The association encountered financial difficulties and in 1923 appealed to the government for assistance. The House of Commons voted to subsidize the association to the extent of $100,000 at $10,000 per month for each of ten months.[31] On June 8, 1923 the association

---

29. The Canadian Pacific and Immigration, a pamphlet based on an address by H. C. P. Cresswell, Chief Commissioner, Department of Immigration and Colonization, Canadian Pacific Railway Company and President, Canada Colonization Association at a meeting of the Canada Colonization Association, Winnipeg, 1954, pp. 12,13.

30. Canadian Annual Review, 1923, p. 361.

31. Ibid., 1923, p. 274.

was reorganized bringing in the C.P.R., the C.N.R. and the government. After extensive land selling campaigns produced inadequate results both the government and the C.N.R. withdrew from the organization. Then, on January 1, 1925 the Canadian Colonization Association, as it was now called, began operating as a subsidiary to the C.P.R. department of Colonization and Development. The company functioned on a non-profit basis in cooperation with such societies as the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the Lutheran Immigration Board, the German Catholic Colonization Association, and the Scottish Immigration Aid Society. In certain instances the association lent money to colonization societies and in other cases it advanced a certain percentage of the cost of transporting immigrants travelling under the auspices of these societies. In 1925 the Canadian Colonization Association was instrumental in settling 607 families on 150,623 acres.[32] According to Cresswell, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's Department of Immigration and Colonization, "The Company's colonization organization, with its subsidiary branches and affiliated organizations, has been the most complete organization ever developed for the recruitment, movement and settlement of colonists to a new country".[33]

It was to the C.P.R. that the Canadian Mennonites were inclined to look for assistance in bringing their brethren from Russia to Canada but before the Russlander could enter this country

---

32. Canadian Annual Review, 1925-26, p. 171.

33. Cresswell, op. cit., p. 19.

the ban imposed upon immigrants of this sect in 1919[34] had to be removed. Accordingly in 1921 the annual convention of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Churches commissioned a delegation to Ottawa to petition the government to revoke the law forbidding the entrance of Mennonites into Canada. The delegation consisted of H. A. Neufeld representing the Mennonite Brethren, H. H. Ewert and A. A. Friessen representing the General Conference Mennonites, and S. F. Coffman, representing the Old Mennonites. In Ottawa the delegation received an encouraging response. Thus in February, 1922 the same delegation joined by Gerhard Ens, G. Goudie and David Toews made a second trip to Ottawa. In reply to their appeal the new Prime Minister, W. L. Mackenzie King, promised action on the issue.[35] An Order-in-Council, June 2, 1923, lifted the ban on the entry of Mennonites. The privilege of entry was, however, subject to several conditions. Mennonite immigrants must be supported and accommodated by the Kanadier brethren,[36] must be placed on farms, must not become a public charge, and would not come under the complete military exemption privilege that had been granted the 1873 Mennonite immigrants.[37]

To promote the cause of immigration the Canadian Conference

---

34. Protokoll der Vertreterversammlung der Mennotischen Sieder Alberta's, 1938, p. 14; Order-in-Council P.O.1204, the Canada Gazette, June 14, 1919.

35. This is one reason why the Russlander Mennonites almost exclusively supported the Liberal Party under King's leadership. King had grown up in an area inhabited by Mennonites and was a personal acquaintance of David Toews, first chairman of the Mennonite Board of Colonization.

36. Kanadier--the German term applied to the Mennonites who had come to Canada prior to the 1920's exclusive of the Old Colony group.

37. Report of the 24th Session of the General Conference of Mennonite Churches of North America, 1926, p. 292.

of Mennonite churches founded the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization at Gretna, Manitoba on May 17, 1922.[38] The main office was to be in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. The first executive consisted of David Toews as chairman, C. J. Andres as secretary treasurer, A. A. Friesen, corresponding secretary and H. A. Neufeld as member. The board immediately sent a delegation to Colonel J. S. Dennis, Chief Commissioner of the Department of Immigration and Development for the Canadian Pacific Railway, seeking credit from the company for immigration purposes. In view of the successful liquidation of debts by the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870's Colonel Dennis promised to present the request to Sir Edward Beatty, then president of the C.P.R.[39] On June 20, 1922 Dennis reported that the C.P.R. had agreed to bring 3000 Mennonites to Canada on credit,[40] and on June 26 the C.P.R. and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization entered into the first credit contract with David Toews signing on behalf of the Mennonites. Later Dennis informed Toews that he had received letters and telegrams from Canadian Mennonites protesting the credit contract.[41] Little did the Mennonites in Canada then realize that not merely 3000 but nearly 20,000 Mennonites would enter Canada on their credit. The C.P.R. extended a total of $1,767,398.68

---

38. Report of the 24th Session of the General Conference of Mennonite Churches of North America, 1926, p. 292.

39. Mennonitische Rundschau, Dec. 21, 1938.

40. Information received from the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

41. Mennonitische Rundschau, Dec. 21, 1938. The debt incurred by the Mennonites came to be known as Reiseschuld, literally Transportation debt. See also D. H. Epp, "Das Zentrale Mennonitische Immigrantenkomitee", Der Bote, July 21,28, 1948.

to Mennonite immigrants.[42] It was the duty of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization to collect this money and repay the C.P.R. in the shortest possible time. To facilitate this the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in 1925 appointed B. B. Janz as the "collector" of the Reiseschuld. This position he held until 1930 when he was succeeded by C. F. Klassen.

With assurances from Canadian Mennonite organizations that everything possible would be done to establish the immigrants and liquidate any debts incurred, the C.P.R. evolved plans to bring a large number of Mennonites from Russia to the prairies.[43] Canadian Mennonites realized that a satisfactory disposition of the first groups of immigrants was necessary if the movement of Mennonites was to continue. The immigrants must not become an economic burden to society because public opinion was scarcely tolerant of continental immigration. When many of the 2400 immigrants who had come in 1923 were still unplaced by midsummer of 1924 the need for closer harmony and cooperation between the Mennonites and the C.P.R. became apparent.[44] As a result Mennonites, with the help of C.P.R. officials, formed the Mennonite Land Settlement Board in July, 1924. This board was composed of three representatives from the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, three from the C.P.R.'s Canada

---

42. Information received from the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and B. B. Janz, collector of the Reiseschuld.

43. Cresswell, op. cit., p. 14; Hedges, op. cit., pp. 368-376.

44. Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite Yearbooks, 1924; Records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

Colonization Association and three from Mennonite newcomers.[45] This new board was obligated to bring landowners who wished to sell their holdings into contact with Mennonite immigrants, to insure against any unfair sales, and to care for the new settlers until they were adequately established.[46]

Large acreages were available but their purchase required careful planning. During the years prior to World War I, when prices for farm produce were good, many landowners had acquired large farms. With the drop in prices after 1921 some landowners were willing to sell part or all of their holdings, preferably in large units. In the face of the prevailing farm situation the sale of whole blocks of land was impossible except to groups of families who would function on a community basis.

Mennonite immigrants offered good prospects of success on large farms operated on a group settlement plan. Because they were largely without means the C.P.R. acted as the chief agency in devising contracts of sale which would safeguard the interests of both vendor and buyer.

The C.P.R. evolved the crop-payment plan to meet the situation.[47] Under this scheme Mennonites were required to deliver annually to the vendor one-half of all crops and livestock produced on the farm, until such time as the total cost was liquidated. This method

---

45. Interview with J. Gerbrandt, Saskatoon. (Mr. Gerbrandt was representative for the Mennonite Land Settlement Board for the Lethbridge area.) Information also in the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite Year books and the records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

46. J. J. Thiesen, "30 Jahre Canadian Mennonite Board", Mennonitische Rundschau, Mar. 12, 1952.

47. Interview with J. Gerbrandt, Saskatoon. Records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

provided settlers with an incentive to achieve maximum production thus making rapid payment for land possible. After a group of Mennonite families had settled on a large farm, the Mennonite Land Settlement Board would send out inspectors to advise the new settlers and thus reduce the possibility of failure. The Canada Colonization Association also provided valuable supervision to insure the success of the settlers. In many instances farmers were advised by these visiting officials to emphasize diversification. According to the Grain Growers' Guide:[48]

> Thousands of acres of farm land in the prairie provinces have already passed into the hands of the Progressive Mennonites. Wherever a large farm is broken up into quarter section units, a representative of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization appears, and in a little while a few families of refugees take possession of the area, and begin farming operations without payment of a cent on the purchase consideration. Sale after sale of this description has been affected on crop payment agreements, and so far the scheme appears to have worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned, although the purchase considerations are greater than if cash or part cash accompanied the transfer of ownership.

The success in settling the Mennonites under the new plan made a further movement of Mennonites from Russia much easier. Through the cooperation of the Canada Colonization Association and the Mennonite organizations, the C.P.R. continued to bring Mennonites to Canada. By 1926 the company had moved 12,000 Mennonites to the Canadian West. Of these, approximately 9000 came in on credit while 3000 came on cash or a prepaid basis. By 1928 the C.P.R. had supervised the colonization of more than 3000 Mennonite families, representing over 16,000 persons, on 700,000 acres of land for which the Mennonite settlers contracted to pay approxi-

---

48. Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 1, 1927, p. 4.

mately thirty million dollars.[49]

The methods evolved in settling the Mennonites benefited many other immigrant groups during the 1920's. Land disposal and financing policies, and the active participation of Mennonites as organizers served as a pattern for the colonization of other European peasant groups in western Canada.[50]

It is evident that the C.P.R. was a prime factor in the settlement of the Canadian West. After the completion of the railway, the company had 25,000,000 acres of crown lands to dispose of and desired to create in the West a farming community that would furnish traffic for the company's struggling rail lines. In 1916, to promote this venture and to meet the demands of settlement, the C.P.R. formed the Department of Colonization headed by Colonel J. S. Dennis. In 1930 this became the Department of Immigration and Colonization.[51]

In selecting the land subsidy which the C.P.R. was to receive for constructing the railway, the company was not obliged to accept areas which were not "fairly fit for settlement".[52] Thus, the C.P.R. declined to accept the area along the main line between

---

49. Interview with J. B. Janz, brother to B. B. Janz, collector of the Reiseschuld. Mr. J. B. Janz lives in Coaldale, Alberta and is custodian of his brother's files while B. B. Janz is away. Information also from the records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

50. J. B. Hedges, op. cit., pp. 373, 376; Canadian Annual Review, 1926-27, p. 184.

51. J. Colley, "Company Colonization Activities Aid Settlement of the Dominion", Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Mar. 1, 1940, p. 6.

52. S. G. Porter, "The Canadian Pacific Land Grants and their Administration", Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Feb. 1, 1940, pp. 1,2.

Moose Jaw and the Rockies because this region was too dry. By 1903 the government demanded that the balance of the land grant comprising some three million acres be selected before the end of the year.[53] The possibilities of irrigation in the dry belt in Alberta had been investigated under the direction of J. S. Dennis, then Inspector of Surveys for the Dominion Government. The investigation showed that there was potentially fertile land between the Bow River on the south and the Red Deer River on the north. The C.P.R. accepted this block of land and subsequently built irrigation works to serve it.[54] It was in these irrigated areas that the most prosperous Russländer settlements arose. These were at Coaldale, Rosemary, Gem, Vauxhall, Brooks and Duchess. Irrigation enabled these Mennonites more effectively to withstand periods of economic stress such as the depression of the 1930's and strenthened the Mennonite churches accordingly. The strongest of these settlements was the one at Coaldale.

The Mennonite settlement at Coaldale owes its beginning to Klaas Enns, who had come to Canada from Russia in 1925. Dissatisfied with conditions in Manitoba, Enns, and his family crossed the country to Alberta. Here the family worked for a beet farmer near Stirling, Alberta. Still dissatisfied Enns continued his search for better opportunities. On one of his excursions he met Mr. Lathrop, an experienced C.P.R. land agent, who offered his farm, valued at $53,000, to Mr. Enns without down payment or written con-

---

53. Porter, op. cit., p. 2.

54. Ibid., p. 2; Hedges, op. cit., pp. 169-211.

tract, demanding only that the buyer seed 150 acres of beets annually and sell them under the name of Mr. Lathrop until the farm should be paid for.[55] In agreement with his three brothers and their families Mr. Enns accepted the offer. In the spring of 1926 the four families established themselves on the farm, facing a questionable undertaking. The venture proved successful and did much to attract other Mennonites to the area.[56]

During 1926 the C.P.R. made more land available in the Coaldale district. The company demanded no down payments, requiring only that for every eighty acres of land received the settler raise ten acres of sugar beets and apply the proceeds as payment for the land. Such was the confidence in the undertaking that the C.P.R. advanced lumber and buildings to new settlers. By the close of 1926 forty Mennonite families had taken up land in the Coaldale area.[57]

At first the newcomers held their religious meetings in the barn loft of the Lathrop farm. A year after the settlement began they transferred their meeting place to the local school. Klaas Enns gave direction in the organization of the Mennonite Brethren congregation in 1926. In 1928 the General Conference Mennonites formally organized a local group. In 1929 the Mennonite Brethren, who were in the majority, built a church. Because of economic necessity the

---

55. J. B. Janz, "Anfang und Wedergang der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinden zu Coaldale", Gedenk-und Dankfeier des 25 jaehrigen Bestehens der Coaldale Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde, May 27, 1951, p. 9.

56. Ibid., p. 9

57. Interview with J. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta.

two church groups worshipped together.[58]

As several families of the General Conference Mennonites had settled in the Didsbury area as early as 1901 a number of Russländer Mennonites were attracted to that district during the 1920's. The earlier settlers, interested in strengthening their group, gladly co-operated in getting the newcomers established. Thus eleven families comprising seventy-four individuals were successfully settled on the Burns Ranch west of Didsbury.[59]

In 1925 twelve families of Mennonites who had just come from Russia, purchased a large tract of land in the Namaka-Strathmore area from the George Lane Company, Ltd. of Calgary.[60] Limited financial resources prompted these immigrants to resort to the cooperative approach in the purchasing of machinery, erection of buildings, and the division of work, but they abandoned joint ownership as soon as the members of the community were well established.

Another company of Russländer immigrants spent the winter of 1925 among the Mennonites just north of Linden and in the spring of 1926 moved on into the Wembley district in the Peace River area.[61] This group also resorted to the common ownership system to facilitate the establishment of the settlement with the intention of reverting to individual ownership as soon as the farmers should be economically

---

58. Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1928

59. General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1925; Didsbury Pioneer, Apr. 6, 1925.

60. Interview with Jacob Gerbrandt, Saskatoon, who was Alberta representative on the Mennonite Land Settlement Board; Calgary Daily Herald, Mar. 4, 1925, p. 12; Strathmore Standard, Mar. 11, 1925, p.1.

61. Grande Prairie Herald Tribune, Apr. 26, 1926; May 3, 1926.

able to do so. The group purchased a ranch of twenty-two quarter sections with 1000 acres under cultivation from the Adair Ranch Company for the sum of $63,350. They agreed to pay for the land on a half-crop share basis over a period of 15 years with interest payable annually at 4% for the first two years and 6% per annum thereafter. This transaction alarmed the Mennonite Land Settlement Board because it had not been consulted concerning the purchase, and it issued an appeal to other immigrants not to purchase land independently of board assistance or direction.[62] In 1928, after only two years of communal operation the twenty-two quarter sections were parcelled out to the individual families.

Mennonites, unlike the Hutterites, never accepted the principle of community of goods as having scriptural basis. They strongly upheld the principle of individual ownership of land and property. Where communal ownership was resorted to it was accepted only as a temporary measure with the understanding that as soon as economic conditions permitted the land would be distributed among the individuals or families. Such was the case at Irma, Crowfoot, Rosemary and Countess where communal ownership was employed but on a smaller scale than in the Namaka and Wembley districts. This procedure was particularly advantageous where large tracts of land could thus be purchased at more reasonable prices and where it furnished greater initial security to a destitute group of immigrants. The Mennonite emphasis on individualism in contrast to the Hutterian

---

62. Grande Prairie Herald Tribune, Apr. 26, 1926, May 3, 1926; Vertreterversammlung, 1936, p. 11; this is the publication of the Vertreterversammlung der Mennoniten Siedler Alberta's, a representative assembly of the Mennonites in Alberta founded to watch over the religious, social and cultural developments of the various settlements in the province.

communalism provides at least one reason why the former have adjusted more readily than the latter.

Two other Mennonite settlements had been established by 1925. One group of 18 families settled in the Linden district between 1923 and 1925.[63] Of this group the majority were Mennonite Brethren. The other group of settlers took up land east of Tofield.[64] The first few Russländer Mennonites landed here in 1924. Subsequent additions enlarged the community of General Conference Mennonites so that a congregation could be organized.

Seven other districts experienced the influx of some Russländer Mennonites between 1926 and 1928.[65] In 1926 four Mennonite Brethren families settled in the Grassy Lake area. There were no immediate additions to this group and being too weak in number to form an independent congregation they required the service of the church at Coaldale. The next year saw five families established in the Pincher Creek district. For a few years this group was affiliated with the Coaldale General Conference Mennonite church. During 1927 four General Conference Mennonite families migrated to the Rosemary district. The success of these first four families soon attracted others into this irrigation area. Most of these were General Conference Mennonites although a few Mennonite Brethren came

---

63. Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1925.

64. General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1925.

65. Information on these colonization efforts was obtained from questionnairs that were sent to each district, church records, reports in Vertreterversammlung, 1928 and from an interview with Jacob Gerbrandt, Saskatoon.

there a few years later. Gem, which also received irrigation, attracted 25 families of Russländer Mennonites in 1928. Here again the General Conference Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren came as one group but worshipped separately from the very beginning of the settlement. During the same year 20 Mennonite Brethren families settled in the La Glace district in the Peace River area.[66] Another seven families also of Mennonite Brethren affiliation entered the Lindbrook district in 1928. This group experienced no further additions and until 1940 held their religious services in the homes of the settlers.

The migrations of two other Mennonite groups, neither of them involving the Russländer, took place during the 1920's. One of these movements consisted of some Holdemanites of the Linden area who were looking for land to establish another colony. The other, which did not affect Alberta immediately consisted of Old Colony Mennonites of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Members of this latter group came to Alberta during the 1930's and 40's.

By the 1920's the Holdemanite colony at Linden, because of natural increase, was in need of more land. This was no longer available anywhere near the old settlement but could be obtained in northern Alberta. In 1928 a number of Holdemanites left Linden for a location near Crooked Creek in the Peace River area.[67] Here they were able to establish a bloc settlement with the advantage of iso-

---

66. Grande Prairie Herald Tribune, May 10, 1928; Vertreterversammlung, 1928; Interview with J. Gerbrandt, Saskatoon.

67. Grande Prairie Herald Tribune, Apr. 16, 1928; Correspondence with John T. Esau, Crooked Creek, Alberta; Church records of Rosedale congregation, Crooked Creek, Alberta.

lation from the "world".

The migration of Old Colony Mennonites of Manitoba and Saskatchewan was occasioned by the controversy over educational matters. Even before 1890 serious differences of opinion had arisen between the conservative Old Colony group and the more liberal General Conference Mennonites regarding state controlled versus private schools. The liberal faction generally agreed to government control and supervision of education and to the use of the English language although they hoped to retain the privilege of teaching German and religion in their schools. The conservative faction on the other hand insisted on the retention of the parochial schools and adopted a policy of passive resistance by keeping their children at home.[68] For this action a considerable number of parents were fined and in some instances jailed. Similar action was taken in Saskatchewan against the Old Colony Mennonites who refused to send their children to school. Some parents with large families paid fines as high as $720 per year.[69] When to the pressures from the liberal Mennonites and government officials was added the public resentment aroused by pacifism and the determination of the Anglo-Saxon majority to force the assimilation of ethnic groups, many Old Colony Mennonites in both

---

68. For a discussion of the Manitoba school controversy see:- W. L. Morton, "Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality", Report of the Canadian Historical Association, 1951; Manitoba Daily Free Press, Aug. 3, 1889; E. K. Francis, "The Mennonite School Problem in Manitoba, 1874-1919", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1953, pp. 204-236; E. K. Francis, "A Bibliography on the Mennonites of Manitoba", Ibid., July, 1953, pp. 237-247.

69. Interview with Mr. J. Friesen, Hague, Saskatchewan, who has in his possession Hague school records.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan began an exodus in 1921. The majority migrated to Mexico and Paraguay.[70] By 1930 approximately 6000 of these Mennonites had left the settlements in Manitoba and about 2000 had departed from Saskatchewan. It was not until the 1930's that some of these settled in the Fort Vermilion area in northern Alberta.

It is evident from the foregoing account of the movements of Mennonites that the Russländer migrations during the 1920's were spread over a period of seven years. The migrants came from many different and scattered colonies in Russia, represented various walks of life and generally constituted a comparatively progressive group. They entered a territory that had advanced well beyond the pioneer stages and offered little opportunity for a closed community type of existence. In fact after 1929 Mennonites often experienced difficulties locating land for more than four or five families in any one locality. These were often separated by several miles so that each settler was surrounded by non-Mennonites. Many of the newcomers early expressed a desire to locate in urban centers for a considerable number of them had held non-agricultural occupations in Russia. Urbanization was, however, discouraged by the directors of Mennonite immigration because the admission of the Russländer had been made conditional upon their readiness to settle on farms. Generally those who had been poorer in Russia suffered less and more of them remained behind. A proportionately larger number of those of

---

70. C. B. Sissons, "Trek of Mennonites had its Tragic Aspects", Free Press Prairie Farmer, Nov. 16, 1921.

middle-class status migrated. Many of the immigrants were therefore progressive in view point and gave every indication that they would be relatively quick to accept the ways of life in the new environment.

This was borne out by the testimony of some periodicals and newspapers. According to the Grain Growers' Guide the Russländer group appeared more progressive than the Mennonite immigrants of an earlier period.[71]

> They are bringing their co-religionists the culture of an older environment and many of them are well educated, in the academic sense of the word. More than one penniless young chap in the parties of Mennonites arriving in the western provinces today is a university graduate. More than one man was a manufacturer or the owner of a large tract of land.
>
> Within about one year from the date of his arrival in Canada, one of the 14 year-old boys included in the 1924 contingent was awarded the governor-general's medal for scholastic proficiency, despite the fact that when he reached Canada he could speak no English.
>
> The progressive Mennonites are just as anxious to send their children to school and give them the advantages of education as are the parents of English speaking children. Public schools in progressive Mennonite districts are well attended and well supported.

In contrast to some of the earlier Mennonite immigrants such as the Holdemanites, the Old Colony Mennonites and some communities of Old Mennonites as for example those of the Tofield district, the Russländer appeared progressive indeed. Describing this later group Professor Sissons wrote "They are keen to pick up English and their evident readiness to put off the old and put on the new

---

71. Grain Growers' Guide, Jan. 11, 1927, pp. 3,4.

does not serve to commend them to some of their Canadian brethren."[72]

A factor inhibiting the adjustment of the newcomers was the resentment expressed by the public at bringing in such poverty stricken Europeans at a time when there was a growing concern over failing prices and markets and increasing unemployment.[73] The fear of popular opposition was no doubt the reason why the Order-in-Council of June 2, 1923[74] lifting the ban on Mennonite immigration was never published in the Canada Gazette.[75] In like manner the pressure of public opinion was partly responsible for the relatively few concessions made to the Russländer as compared to the liberal concessions made to their brethren who had come to Canada during the 1870's.[76] The Mennonite immigrants of the 1920's obtained no promise of exemption from any laws covering Canadian citizens generally. A further occasion for reservations on the part of the public was the German language. Although apparently eager to learn English, the Russländer emphasized the use of German speech in the home, church and where possible in community contacts. In fact, German night classes were held in churches to insure the younger generation against the loss of German.[77]

---

72. C. B. Sissons, "The Mennonites of Western Canada", The New Outlook, Mar. 7, 1928.

73. Canadian Annual Review, 1923, p. 168.

74. Order-in-Council, June 2, 1923, quoted in part in a letter from the Dominion Archivist, Ottawa.

75. A Search of the Canada Gazette for this period revealed no mention of the Order-in-Council.

76. Dominion Lands Act of 1872, 35 Vic.; ch. 23; Order-in-Council, Mar. 3, 1873; Canadian Annual Review, 1922, p. 280.

77. Vertreterversammlung, 1928.

The Russländer also experienced some difficulty adjusting to their Canadian brethren who had come west prior to 1914. These included the Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Holdemanites. These earlier settlers differed from the Russländer in racial origin, language and traditions. Except for the Holdemanites, the Mennonite immigrants of the pre-war period used English in the home, church and community. Their experiences were vastly different from those of the Russländer. They had been in America since 1683 and had adopted many of her ways. By settling in Alberta during the pioneer days they were able to take advantage of free lands, local businesses and industries and did not find it necessary to emphasize cooperation as a group in order to strengthen themselves economically. The individualism of the frontier also played its part in the lives of these early Mennonite settlers. The Russländer Mennonites, on the other hand, had long enjoyed a higher standard of living and culture than their Russian neighbours, a status which they had attained through cooperative endeavor. This spirit of cooperation the Russländer Mennonites carried over into the Canadian environment and it served a good purpose when they arrived as penniless refugees, deeply in debt to both the C.P.R. and Canadian landholders. Cooperation among Mennonites in economic, educational and religious undertakings was considered necessary to promote the Mennonite faith in a progressive society. Even on the issue of military service a difference prevailed because through their participation in the Russian Forestry Service and the Selbschutz many Russländer Mennonites had weakened in their

non-resistant principles. The contacts between these two general groupings was thus very limited, at least until the outbreak of the second World War.

In Alberta the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite groups cooperated in many endeavors. These two groups were predominantly Russländer, a fact which facilitated united action. Shortly after the first of their number arrived in Alberta they called meetings to discuss economic, social and religious problems. These meetings became known as the Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale.[78] One of the earliest fruits of these conferences was the DoktorVerein (Doctor Society) organized in 1926. Mennonites of the Coaldale district entered into a contract with Dr. W. S. Galbraith of Lethbridge who agreed to render all professional services to the members of the society and their families for a monthly fee of $1.00 per family.[79] The purpose of the society was to extend medical service to Mennonites at a cost that the average settler could afford.[80] A further development akin to the medical scheme was the Beerdigungskässe (Burial Fund Society) organized in 1928 for the purpose of providing financial aid for the burial of the dead.[81]

---

78. Conference of the Mennonite groups of the Coaldale and neighbouring districts.

79. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Dec. 22, 1928.

80. The statute of the Society was reproduced in Ibid., Jan. 9, 1942.

81. Ibid., Nov. 18, 1928.

In order to promote the economic status of their brethren throughout the province and to preserve the Mennonite faith the Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale in 1928 called a meeting of representatives from all Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite settlements and organized the Vertreterversammlung der Mennoniten Siedler Alberta's.[82] This was a representative assembly of the Mennonites in Alberta founded to watch over the religious, social and cultural developments of the various communities in the province. Because its area of supervision extended over both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites the powers of this organization were limited, consisting of reports and recommendations on social, cultural and religious matters. The association did much to encourage the establishment of German libraries and promoted instruction in German and religion on Saturdays. When individual settlers or infant communities encountered serious economic difficulties, a recommendation for financial assistance was usually presented at the next Vertreterversammlung. Those Mennonites residing in districts where their number was too small to organize a local congregation and where further additions were impossible, were urged to resettle in or near established Mennonite centers. After the 1930's the Vertreterversammlung became the centralizing body and ultimate authority for most Mennonite endeavors in Alberta.

The Vertreterversammlung rendered valuable service also

---

82. Vertreterversammlung, Nov. 1, 1928.

in the collection of the Reiseschuld.[83] For this purpose the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites had organized a "Provincial Committee" in each province. The province in turn was divided into districts each having a Distriktmann (district representative) who was responsible for the Reiseschuld payments in his area. In Alberta the Provincial Committee and the Districtmaenner were responsible to the Vertreterversammlung, which in turn was responsible to the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. In most of the larger Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite settlements such as Coaldale, an Ortskomitee (local committee) aided the district representative in his work. The Vertreterversammlung was financed by a levy of three dollars on every church member over sixteen years of age.

In addition to the cooperative and organizational endeavors already mentioned, the newcomers of the 1920's and with them the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Old Mennonites readily adopted new methods that promised to be useful in the preservation of that which was believed to be essential to the Mennonite faith. The influence of the public schools and other community activities could prove detrimental unless something was done to promote Mennonitism.

The Mennonite Brethren in Christ sought to accomplish this by emphasizing summer youth camps, vacation Bible schools, revival meetings in their churches and evangelistic campaigns. Meetings were often conducted in large tents during the summer months. They also organized church youth clubs and founded a Young Peoples' Fel-

---

83. Correspondence with B. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta. Vertreterversammlung, Dec., 1929.

lowship which was one of the fruits of the Youth Convention held at Alsask in 1925.[84] In order to give both old and young a good knowledge of the Bible and establish them in the Mennonite faith the Mennonite Brethren in Christ conducted Bible classes in church or in homes as early as 1920. These classes kept many young people as well as older church members busy during the long winter evenings from November to March[85] of each year and did much to promote the organization of the Mountain View Bible College which was opened on November 11, 1926. Of special significance to the ladies and young girls of Mennonite Brethren in Christ churches was the Womens' Society begun at Didsbury in 1925, and the associated girls' clubs designed to provide religious instruction and promote missionary activities.[86]

The Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites also sought to counteract outside influences by emphasizing instruction of their youth. The Old Mennonites conducted a circulating Bible School which concentrated on each Old Mennonite community for six or eight weeks every winter.[87] This group, however, did not make extensive use of Bible camps, revival meetings or youth organizations largely because of its conservatism in the form of religious services and methods of promoting faith. The work

---

84. Gospel Banner, Nov. 12, 1925, p. 14; Dec. 10, 1925, p. 13; General Conference Journal, 1925, p. 22.

85. Correspondence with Rev. Alvin Traub, the founder and first president of the college.

86. General Conference Journal, 1930, p. 13.

87. E. D. Zook, editor, The Mennonite Yearbook and Directory, 1959, p. 45.

of the Russländer groups was limited because they had not been in Canada long enough, their number was continually being increased by newcomers, and they faced many problems characteristic of every company of immigrants. Nonetheless, both the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites had already in 1927 organized a youth work which began at Coaldale and later was enlarged into an association covering all of their settlements.[88] In 1929 the Mennonite Brethren opened a Bible school at Coaldale, with the express purpose of establishing their youth in the Mennonite faith.[89] To further facilitate the teaching of religion and German to their youth, the newcomers in 1927 began Saturday schools.[90] These were conducted either in homes or where possible, as in Coaldale, in halls built for the purpose. In all these educational endeavors the Mennonites were not only expressing their concern for the preservation of Mennonitism but also manifesting a desire to promote their own education as they had done for many years in their colonies in Russia.

A further endeavor designed to preserve Mennonitism was the widespread use of the press. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ young people's executive first published the Western Evangel in 1927, which became the official youth publication of the Northwest District.[91]

---

88. Gedenk-und Dunkfeier des 25 jaehrigen Bestchens der Coaldale Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde, May 27, 1951, pp. 61-64 and 41-46.

89. Ibid., pp. 55-60

90. Ibid., pp. 47-51

91. E. D. Zook, Ed., The Mennonite Yearbook and Directory, 1959, p. 45.

The Gospel Banner, published by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ conference, was used in the West as soon as the first settlers of this group arrived at Didsbury.[92] In 1924, as a further measure against vague convictions and the consequent intrusion of different beliefs, the Canadian Northwest Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ distributed a Book of Religious Instruction, which was in the nature of a catechism. The Mennonite Brethren, as early as 1915, came out with one English publication, the Christian Leader, and one German periodical, Der Zionsbote. These were both American publications serving the whole North American Mennonite Brethren Conference. The Russländer soon supplemented these periodicals by the Rundschau, which was published in German. In addition the General Conference Mennonites supplied their people with The Mennonite and Der Bote. Considerable influence was exercised by D. W. Friesen and Sons, of Altona, Manitoba, who published many books, articles, and papers for the Canadian West. The Mennonite Young People's Quarterly and Der Kinderbote were designed for Mennonite youth. The latter was specifically intended to encourage the continued use of the German language. All these publications were intended to preserve Mennonite traditions, the German language, the ethnic "we-feeling", and above all the Mennonite religion. The periodicals obtained wide circulation through church membership distribution.

In all these efforts to establish themselves in Alberta while at the same time implementing measures to ensure the preservation of

---

92. Didsbury Pioneer, Nov. 16, 1920; Mennonite Brethren in Christ Yearbook, 1922, reports for year 1920-21.

their religion, the Russländer were encouraged by the presence in the West of many other ethnic groups. Immigration figures, as summarized in Table II, indicate that during the peak immigration years the number of people entering Canada from the United Kingdom was substantially below the number coming from other countries.[93] The British elements in

TABLE II

Number of British and non-British immigrants for the years 1909-1914 and 1924-1929

Year	U.K.	Other	Year	U.K.	Other
1909	52,901	94,007	1924	72,919	75,641
1910	59,790	149,004	1925	53,178	58,184
1911	123,013	188,071	1926	37,030	59,034
1912	138,121	216,116	1927	49,784	94,207
1913	150,542	251,890	1928	55,848	110,935
1914	142,622	242,256	1929	66,801	98,192

Canada had not assimilated the many Germans, Norwegians, French, Ukranians, Poles and others who had come into the West before World War I. When to these were added the large number of Europeans who entered Canada during the 1920's the assimilation process was further retarded. In any such heterogeneous society it became easier for any one immigrant group to longer retain its identity. With an increasing number of foreigners as compared to the number of British and British-American stock, it became apparent that there would ultimately be an assimilation to an evolving and yet undetermined pattern of society which would incorporate values and standards from all the different ethnic groups.

---

93. Statistics compiled by author from Canada Year Books.

CHAPTER FOUR

Developments in the Depression, 1930-1939

The industrial boom of the mid-twenties had given rise to over-optimism and over-extension of credit. Already in 1928 it was threatened by increasing technological unemployment and by overproduction in relation to the demand of the consuming public. Agricultural surpluses prior to 1929, both in America and Europe, aggravated the situation. Allied war debts and transfers of German reparations seriously disturbed the credit and foreign exchange system. It was not surprising, therefore, that a severe economic depression followed the stock market collapse in October, 1929. It soon became apparent that the traditionally self-subsistent farm was in no position to absorb the industrial unemployed. The prolonged drought which accompanied the depression made the situation even worse. The prairie farmer, with his dependence on a single staple, was plagued by high capital requirements and a continuing debt. In 1933 the depression reached its lowest level with some 500,000 unemployed and wheat prices at a record low of thirty-eight cents per bushel at Winnipeg. Although there was a slow recovery in the volume of production in some primary industries after 1933, prices remained low. Agricultural exports remained depressed partly because European countries, fearing another war, sought to increase their self-sufficiency in food. The Canadian high tariff policy created further difficulties by adding to the farmers' costs and making it harder for them to compete in world markets.

In the face of these conditions Mennonites were confronted with several major responsibilities. A considerable number of their brethren in Russia were still looking for an opportunity to migrate to Can-

ada. The comparatively large influx of Russländer during the 1920's necessitated the accomodation of these newcomers on the farms of their Kanadier brethren. When the drought hit the prairies during the 1930's many of these Russländer had not yet been established on land. Many who had served as farm hands were no longer needed. The additions to their numbers had also created, within the Mennonite communities, problems of church extension and religious education. An issue which neither the Kanadier nor the Russländer appear to have seriously anticipated was the matter of adjustment between the two groups. The Russländer, being in many ways more progressive than their Kanadier brethren, had by the early 1930's begun to dominate Mennonite organizations in Canada, particularly in the West where most of them had settled. They were, therefore, imparting their views and methods to the whole Mennonite fellowship, to the dismay of many of the more conservative Kanadier church leaders. Perhaps the most pressing problem, however, was the liquidation of the Reiseschuld (transportation debt).

Because of depression conditions Mennonites experienced disappointments in their endeavors to continue the transfer of their brethren from Russia into Canada. On November 6, 1929 when Mackenzie King was visiting his constituency in western Canada, a Mennonite delegation, led by Bishop Toews of Rosthern, approached the Prime Minister about the possibility of bringing into this country a thousand families stranded outside Moscow.[1] King, at the time, indicated that further Mennonite migrations to Canada

---

1. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 181.

might be possible only if Mennonites already economically established were prepared to give assurances that none of the refugees would become a public charge. He also emphasized that provincial governments would have to be consulted before any action could be taken. The next day, Robert Forke, Minister of Immigration and Colonization sent the following wire to Hon. J. T. M. Anderson, Premier of Saskatchewan:[2]

> I shall greatly appreciate your consideration of the following situation. On humanitarian grounds I am being urged to allow transfer to Canada from Russia via Germany of approximately one thousand Mennonite agricultural families who claim to have been dispossessed of their property and are at present outside the gates of Moscow without funds or friends.
>
> I am authoritatively informed that the Soviet Government on economic grounds has expressed inability to feed these people and threatens immediate deportation to Siberia, resulting in inevitable starvation. Representatives of Canadian Mennonites are due here this weekend. I am informed that they are coming with an offer from Canadian Mennonites farming in Canada to open their homes and receive these distressed fellow-Mennonites and maintain them until work begins next spring.
>
> Arrangements for transport can be made without cost to Government, but have not yet agreed to receive any of these families. I understand these newcomers and those who have within the past few years come to Canada will conform to Canadian school regulations.
>
> We will not expect Provinces or Municipalities to assume any responsibility and will endeavor to arrange movement so as not to aggravate the employment situation.

The mere suggestion by the Department of Immigration that the refugees be allowed to enter Canada aroused strong popular opposition. Protests reached the Saskatchewan premier from farmers',

---

2. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 182; The Morning Leader, Regina, Nov. 8, 1929. The wire appeared in a news story of the Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Nov. 9, 1929 on the front page with a banner headline in red:-"Asks Saskatchewan to take Mennonites".

veterans' and municipal organizations.[3] Most complaints drew attention to the already grave unemployment situation and expressed fears that the newcomers might not accept the laws of Canada.[4]

After meeting with officials of both the C.P.R. and C.N.R. Premier Anderson in a letter to Bishop Toews[5] summarized the position of the Saskatchewan government. He expressed appreciation of the many fine qualities of the Mennonite settlers of the West and indicated a readiness on the part of the government to admit relatives of Mennonites already in Canada but demanded that the Department be provided with a list of relatives including full particulars and a list of Mennonite farmers who would accommodate these newcomers. The Minister further explained that admission of the refugees would also hinge upon federal government guarantees that none of the immigrants would later become a public charge and that any deportation costs would not rest upon the provincial government. He concluded by drawing attention to the unemployment problem which already had cost the government over 500,000 dollars in relief and public works projects.

In November 15, 1929, Mr. Forke reminded Mr. Anderson that unless a decision regarding the Mennonites was forthcoming the following day, those already in Moscow would be deported to points in Siberia. In reply Premier Anderson sent Mr. Forke a copy of the letter written to Bishop Toews and suggested that the problem be

---

3. "Say Forke should get all facts on Mennonite people", Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Nov. 9, 1929, p. 3.

4. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 182.

5. Letter from J. T. M. Anderson to David Toews, Nov. 14, 1929, in archives of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 183; The Morning Leader, Nov. 15, 1929.

referred to the League of Nations.[6] Ten days later Dr. Anderson informed Mr. Forke that the Saskatchewan government flatly refused to accept any Mennonites other than relatives of those in the province.[7] In response to an appeal from Toews on November 16, Premier J. E. Brownlee of Alberta wired Forke that owing to the unemployment situation no Mennonites would be admitted to that province,[8] although Hon. W. Finlayson, Minister of Lands and Forests for Alberta, on November 20 advised that a "thorough study" would be made.[9] In view of such response from the provinces Mr. Forke announced on November 26 that further consideration of the proposal to bring Mennonite refugees to Canada would be postponed until the spring of 1930.

The decision of the federal and provincial governments caused Mennonites much concern. This was expressed at a four-day Mennonite convention held at Coaldale.[10] Letters received from relatives in Russia told of severe suffering, privation and disease as a result of which many had already died.[11] Appeals to the government of Manitoba and C.P.R. officials finally resulted in a migration of 118 families comprising approximately 1000 per-

---

6. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 183; The Regina Star, Nov. 16, 1929.

7. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 182.

8. Ibid., p. 182; The Calgary Herald, Jan. 7, 1930.

9. Manitoba Free Press, Nov. 21, 1929.

10. Lethbridge Herald, Nov. 28, 1929, Dec. 2, 1929; Vertreterversammlung, 1928-30; Mennonite Brethren Year Books, 1929 and 30; General Conference Mennonite Year Books, 1929 and 30.

11. Lethbridge Herald, Nov. 30, 1929; Canadian Annual Review, 1929, p. 184.

sons to Manitoba.[12] A similar number of families entered Saskatchewan on the basis of the government's policy to admit only relatives of Mennonites already in the province. The bulk of the Mennonite refugee families who were able to leave Russia migrated to Brazil and Paraguay.[13] Large numbers were deported to various parts of the Soviet Union.[14]

The widespread discussion and popular antagonism aroused by the Mennonite appeals indicated a changed outlook. Whereas the Canadian government had long promoted immigration especially of farmers, there was after 1928 a definite departure from the customary procedure. The Minister of Immigration now introduced the practice of consulting provincial governments particularly involved in any immigration proposal. This change in the immigration policy of the federal government came shortly after it had given the western provinces the jurisdiction over their natural resources.[15]

The interest aroused throughout the country by the Mennonite immigration issue led to the formulation of definite policies by the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan.[16] The latter created a Provincial Immigration Commission to conduct hearings and make recommendations regarding the projected provincial immigration policy,

---

12. Canadian Annual Review, 1929, p. 184.

13. Lethbridge Herald, March 15, 1930; Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite Year Books for the years 1930-1934.

14. J. A. Neufeld, "Die Mennoniten Russlands während des zweiten Weltkrieges und das Schicksal der Verbannten,"-a speech given at an inter-Mennonite meeting in Saskatoon, July 20-21, 1949. Archives of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Gerhard Fast, Im Schatten des Todes, Winnipeg, 1956.

15. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 185.

16. Ibid., p. 185; The Telegram, Toronto, June 6, 1930.

while the former, under acting-Premier George Hoadley, indicated that in future all immigrants to Alberta would come in on condition that they possessed sufficient means to maintain themselves until employment was secured.

This rejection of the policy of assisted immigration had popular support and was a subject of wide comment during 1929 and 1930. Depressed economic conditions accentuated in the West by the failure to sell grain on world markets convinced many that immigration, especially assisted immigration, was bad for the economy. The diminished demand for seasonal labor and the restrictions on industrial production produced a similar reaction against immigration.[17] The Manitoba Free Press described Canadians as "rapidly getting to the place where they are fed up with assisted immigration."[18] The members of the Canadian Legion in the Lethbridge area reflected this attitude when in November, 1929 it requested the government to appoint a special commission to deal with the immigration problem. The Legion recommended drastic restrictions and more rigid selection of settlers and expressed opposition to the influx of penniless Mennonites or other refugees.[19] When, early in January of 1930, it appeared that the C.P.R., C.N.R. and government officials were contemplating the transfer of some Mennonites to Canada, Dr. James Cotton, committee supervisor on behalf of Eastern National Advis-

---

17. David C. Corbett, Canada's Immigration Policy, Toronto, 1957, pp. 7, 15, 148-157.

18. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 187; Manitoba Free Press, Aug. 31, 1929.

19. Lethbridge Herald, Nov. 28, 1929.

ory Publicity Committee of the Native Sons of Canada, wired the Minister of Labor and the Department of Immigration and Colonization, protesting the influx on the premise that the labor market was already flooded.[20] Some members of the Legislative Assembly also objected to the dumping of immigrants into Alberta and advocated steps to prevent such flooding of the province with surplus labor.[21] Alberta's Premier Brownlee of the U.F.A. contended that the federal government had been too indiscriminate in admitting immigrants[22] and reported that his office was swamped with pleas that immigration be stopped.[23]

By 1932 popular pressure and economic distress had reduced immigration to a mere trickle. As Table III indicates, only 14,382 persons entered Canada in 1933.[24] This is a small number when con-

TABLE III

Immigration figures for the years 1900 to 1939

Year	No. of Immigrants	Year	No. of Immigrants	Year	No. of Immigrants	Year	No. of Immigrants
1900	23,895	1910	208,794	1920	117,336	1930	104,806
1901	49,149	1911	311,084	1921	148,477	1931	27,530
1902	67,379	1912	354,237	1922	89,999	1932	20,591
1903	128,364	1913	402,432	1923	72,887	1933	14,382
1904	130,331	1914	383,878	1924	148,560	1934	12,476
1905	146,266	1915	144,789	1925	111,362	1935	11,277
1906	186,064	1916	48,537	1926	96,064	1936	11,643
1907	124,667	1917	75,374	1927	143,991	1937	15,101
1908	262,469	1918	79,074	1928	166,783	1938	17,244
1909	146,908	1919	57,702	1929	164,993	1939	16,994
	1,265,492		2,066,901		1,260,452		652,044

---

20. Lethbridge Herald, Jan. 11, 1930.
21. Ibid., Mar. 8, 1930
22. Canadian Annual Review, 1929-30, p. 497
23. Ibid., p. 490; Edmonton Journal, Nov. 12, 1929.
24. Statistics compiled by author from Canada Year Books.

trasted with the 166,783 newcomers of 1928 or the 402,432 immigrants two decades earlier. The Department of Immigration and Colonization in cooperation with the colonization departments of the C.P.R. and C.N.R. now applied its efforts to relief settlement. This was a land-ward movement from cities to farms. Initially government assistance was confined to city dwellers who possessed enough capital to establish themselves on land.[25] After May, 1932, the government, as an inducement to families of limited means, undertook to share part of the cost of movement by contributing one-third of an amount not to exceed $600. This assistance was intended as a measure of self-sustained relief to families who would otherwise be on direct relief and was not to be used for the purchase or rent of a farm.[26] Aid was extended only where the family concerned qualified for the undertaking and where municipal and provincial governments were prepared to make a similar contribution.[27] These efforts were employed until the beginning of World War II.[28] From June 1, 1932 to September 30, 1935 more than 149,000 persons were moved from cities to farms.[29]

In this type of settlement process the Mennonites also had a part. Many of the Mennonite immigrants of the 1920's had not im-

---

25. Canada Year Book, 1932, p. 162.

26. Ibid., 1934-35, p. 229

27. Canadian Annual Review, 1932, pp. 419-420

28. Ibid., 1934, pp. 531,532; 1935-36, pp. 150,151; 1938, pp. 125,126.

29. Canada Year Book, 1936, p. 202.

mediately secured land. They had worked on the farms of their Kanadier (Canadian) brethren. After 1929, with the advent of the economic depression these landless Russländer (Mennonites from Russia) found themselves under pressure to locate land. Faced with low prices, drought conditions and the Reiseschuld (transportation debt) many of the Kanadier brethren could no longer retain Russländer families as hired hands. This was particularly true of those Mennonites residing in Saskatchewan and in the unirrigated areas of Alberta. Consequently many of the landless Russländer gravitated to the Mennonite settlements in the irrigation districts of Alberta where the large sugar beet acreages provided these families with work while they waited for land to be located. In 1932 there were fifty-one such families in Coaldale alone.[30] In the next few years another 90 families resided temporarily in this area, of whom fifty finally settled in British Columbia and thirty moved to other parts of Alberta such as Vauxhall, Rosemary, Calgary, Glenwood, Namaka and Pincher Creek.[31]

In their endeavors to settle these landless families and establish the immigrant community Mennonite leaders encountered serious difficulties. The administrative problem early became apparent. The three boards which sought to serve the immigrants were the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee, and the Mennonite Land Settlement Board. The limitations of each of these and the lack of integration of effort

---

30. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Dec. 29, 1932.

31. Vertreterversammlung, Nov. 19, 1942, p. 25.

seriously hindered the work.

As early as 1931 the need for reorganization was discussed at meetings of the Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee. Many reasons for a change were brought forward.[32] The Mennonite Land Settlement Board was described as weak in both reputation and function. Although this body was Mennonite in name and under the chairmanship of David Toews, the Mennonite community had little authority over the organization's policy and administration. The directives came chiefly from the Canada Colonization Association and its C.P.R. officials.[33] To this was added the widespread suspicion that David Toews and his associates were receiving a substantial commission for their work.[34] It was also charged that the Mennonite Land Settlement Board and its chairman had not kept the district representation on the board up-to-date, that it functioned too autocratically and that there was need for economy and more activity on the part of the members.[35] Although Toews admitted that the Board was in a precarious position,[36] the criticisms may not have been entirely justified for they reflected the contention that had arisen between the Kanadier and Russländer. Many of the Kanadier resented having to pay for the Reiseschuld, disapproved of having Russländer in positions of leadership, and opposed the

---

32. Protokoll der erweiterten Komiteesitzung der Z.M.I.K. am 6 u. 7 Juli, 1932, 25 Juli, 1933; David Toews, "Neuorganization der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization" Der Zweiunddreisiglste Allgemeine Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada, 1934, pp. 55-57.

33. Letter from David Toews to J. H. McAllister, Sep. 1, 1931, in the records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

34. Letter from J. J. Hildebrand to David Toews, Oct. 1, 1934, records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

35. Minutes of the Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee, Jul. 6-7, 1932; Letter from David Toews to churches, Sep. 7, 1934, records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

36. David Toews, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

progressive policies of the newcomers. The Russländer, on the other hand, felt that on the principle of brotherly love and mutual aid the Kanadier were under oblig ation to bear the cost of establishing the immigrants. They also contended that the Kanadier were too conservative in attitude and lacked initiative.

During the early 1930's immigrant affairs received the most attention at the meetings of the Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee. Its ability to meet immigrant problems was, however, limited by lack of funds and authority. Out of the discussions of various issues by this organization emerged a plan to amalgamate the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the Central Mennonite Immigrant Committee. It was proposed that a board of twenty-two members be created, representative of the Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the General Conference Mennonites. Since most of the immigrants were affiliated with either of the latter two conferences, the plan would help to eliminate the existing differences between the Kanadier and Russländer and would constitute a step toward the formation of a representative body. It was agreed that the various areas of work such as organization, settlement, finance, welfare and culture could be promoted by subcommittees and that the Mennonite Land Settlement Board be discontinued.

In the summer of 1934, David Toews presented the plans for reorganization to the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite conferences at Winkler and Hague respectively. The plans were approved with David Toews once again as chairman. At the first meeting of the enlarged Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in July it was agreed that one-third of its membership should be elected every three years.[37]

---

37. David Toews, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

The activities of the new Board soon resulted in the founding of provincial and local organizations under the direction of distrikt maenner (district representatives) with emphasis on welfare, cultural and settlement problems.[38]

Both the method and nature of the reorganization were not without their opponents within the Mennonite conferences. The procedure was criticized by some Kanadier brethren as "another of the undemocratic acts of the Board".[39] So strong was the dissatisfaction expressed in Mennonite periodicals that the Board requested the editors of Mennonitische Rundschau, Der Bote, and Steinbach Post not to publish articles by such men as H. Schroeder, J. J. Hildebrand and Fritz Senn.[40] Much of the opposition was aroused by the re-election of David Toews as chairman of the new Board and C. F. Klassen as chief debt collector. Both these men because of their determined efforts at collecting the Reiseschuld had become unpopular with many Kanadier who did not feel obligated to help liquidate a debt which some of those who had been rescued from communist oppression were refusing to pay.[41] On the other hand many Russländer resented the continual pressure placed upon them to meet their Reiseschuld obligations. This was true particularly of those who argued that on the basis of mutual aid, as enjoined by the Scriptures, the more fortunate Kanadier brethren should

---

38. Vertreterversammlung, 1935, p. 16.

39. Letter from J. J. Hildebrand to David Toews, Oct. 1, 1934, in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

40. Protokoll der Sitzung der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization am 14. u. 15. November, 1934 zu Winnipeg, Manitoba.

41. C. F. Klassen, Vortrag von C. F. Klassen auf der Provincialversammlung in Saskatoon am 16. u. 17. Juli, 1942, in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

carry the major burden of the debt.[42] Some criticism also came from those Russländer who were disappointed by the failure of the Board to show any interest in the creation of compact Mennonite colonies for which a civic organization would be required rather than a mere board dealing with the problems of scattered Mennonite communities. Those who hoped for the formation of some "Mennonite commonwealth" such as they had enjoyed in Russia were also the strongest proponents of Deutschtum (Germanism),[43] which, no doubt, reflected the influence of the contact with the German forces in 1917.[43a] Many church leaders, however, believed that the creation of a new board, representative of both Russländer and Kanadier interests, would serve as a way of bridging the gap between the two groups.

It now became the task of the newly organized Board and the provincial associations to grapple with the settlement problems which were essentially practical and demanded primary consideration. Among the major concerns were the settlement of landless families and the relocation of many who had purchased land but were unable to pay.[44] This involved also the

---

42. C. F. Klassen, op. cit.

43. A more complete discussion of this aspect is given in chapter five. See also the following:-Jakob Thiessen, "Wir Mennoniten," Der Bote, Apri. 12, 1933, pp. 2,3; H. A. Peters, "Burgerliche Mennonitische Organization früher und jetzt"-a paper given at the seventh annual meeting of Mennonites in Saskatchewan, July 12-13, 1935; Letter from J. J. Hildebrand to David Toews, Oct. 1, 1934. Both of these are available in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon; J. J. Hildebrand, Chronologische Zeittafel, North Kildonan, Manitoba, 1945, pp. 387-403; J. J. Hildebrand, "Unser Mennostaat" Mennonitische Rundschau, May 10, 1933, p.13; P. D. Willms, "Unsere Problems", Der Bote, Jan. 31, 1934, pp. 1, 2.

43a. Chapter 3, p. 90, above.

44. J. J. Dyck, "Bericht über die wirtschaftliche Notlage in Saskatchewan", Vertreterversammlung, Dec. 8-10, 1931, pp. 5,6.

searching out of credit opportunities for the purchasing of land and building supplies, and the provision of information on farming methods, marketing of produce and purchasing of farm needs.

In some of these areas, particularly in establishing larger settlements, the organizations were not very successful. Only a few large blocs of land were available for settlement in the 1930's but these could not be accepted by Mennonites because of the amount of cash necessary for purchase. In 1930 the Provincial Committee reported that good irrigation land northeast of Coaldale was available for 45 to 50 dollars per acre. A cash payment of twenty per cent was required and because of this the land could not be purchased by the destitute Russländer families.[45] The acquisition of large blocs of land on a cooperative basis was also hindered by many individualists within the Mennonite groups. Whereas the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and the provincial organizations emphasized the necessity of cooperation between the landseeker and the Mennonite society as a whole, many felt that the search for land and the burden of settlement was the concern of the individual only. This latter view was strengthened by the depressed economic conditions which made many Mennonite farmers reluctant to assist in settlement activities and by the prevailing differences between the Russländer and the Kanadier. By 1937 the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization had encountered so many discouragements in its attempts to promote cooperative efforts in settlement that David Toews, chairman of the Board, stated that perhaps it was better that families locate land and solve their problems independently of Mennonite organizations.[46]

---

45. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bie Coaldale, Dec. 29, 1932.

46. Vertreterversammlung, 1937, p. 24.

Another settlement problem that caused Mennonite leaders much concern was the limited supply of land in any one locality.[47] In most districts only three or four farms were available and often these were separated by several miles. This made the organization of a local Mennonite congregation very difficult or impossible. The drought showed up the sub-marginal lands and these the original settlers were deserting.[48] Mennonites, however, realized the futility of locating on such lands and government authorities discouraged it.

In 1934 the Colonization Board sought to interest Mennonites in the establishment of a colony on a tract of land near the Athabasca River approximately 90 miles north of Edmonton. Although this was homestead land, it failed to attract the landless Russländer who refused to face the prospect of long years of bush clearing and land breaking. During the same year the Board succeeded in getting a settlement started at Irma but subsequent years of drought forced these settlers to locate elsewhere. Most of them migrated to British Columbia.[49] In 1935 the Colonization Board made another effort at promoting group settlement, this time in the Blue Ridge district northwest of Edmonton and just south of the Athabasca River. Six families responded to the opportunity but enlargement of the colony was necessary if success of the settlement was to be assured. The

---

47. Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1934, p. 73; 1935, pp. 44, 45; 1936, p. 75; 1937, p. 56.

48. Report on Rural Life due to Drought Conditions and Crop Failures, 1930-1937, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture, 1939.

49. G. W. Sawatzky, Siedlungsmöglichkeiten, report to the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization meeting, Dec. 21, 1934; Minutes of the annual provincial meeting in British Columbia, Oct. 9, 1937; G. J. Derken and A. J. Fast, Report on Mennonite Settlements in British Columbia, Oct. 9, 1937; Minutes of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization meeting, Oct. 14, 1936. These are available in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Colonization Board sent strong appeals to landless Mennonites to join the Blue Ridge farmers in order to strengthen the community and make possible the organization of a local church. There was, however, no response and the six families were left isolated.[50] Four of the original six families subsequently moved out of the district. The remaining two have since lost contact with the Mennonite groups in the province. Settlements at Rosemary, Gem and Swalwell were strengthened by the slow addition of Russländer families throughout the 1930's, particularly between 1930 and 1936.[51] One very successful settlement was established at Vauxhall where between 1929 and 1937 seventy-five families took up irrigation land and developed into a prosperous Mennonite community.[52] By 1935 the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites each had erected a church to serve the spiritual needs of the brethren in the district.

Despite efforts of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization to encourage settlement in districts where the available acreage would be large enough to accommodate ten or more families in close proximity, many Mennonites settled in very small numbers in the more developed parts of the province. It was quite apparent that many of the Russländer who had enjoyed a high degree of prosperity in Russia as large land owners, industrialists or professionals, were not willing to accept land under pioneer conditions.[52a] Mennonite leaders deplored the necessity of or the desire for locating in totally non-Mennonite communities, accused some of placing economic interests before the religious and warned that residence in such districts could only lead to a loss of all Mennonite connections.

---

50. Vertreterversammlung, 1937, p. 24.

51. Ibid., 1942, p. 25

52. Ibid., 1942, p. 25

52a. Chapter 3, pp. 84-87, above.

Most of these scattered families sought initially to keep in touch with Mennonite congregations by occasional visits and personal correspondence with relatives and pastors.[54] Churches likewise endeavored to promote a vital relationship by forwarding bulletins and publications to them and by supporting pastoral visits. But it became apparent even in the 1930's that such contacts were not sufficient to retain them within the Mennonite fellowship. This is substantiated by Table IV which presents a list of the districts and the number of families that located in each during the 1930's.[55] All 94 families listed had by the early 1940's severed connections with Mennonite churches chiefly because of

TABLE IV

Russländer families who settled in isolation from Mennonite influence during the 1930's

District	No. of families	District	No. of families	District	No. of families
Crowfoot	3	Nampa	1	Lacombe	3
Dawson Creek	4	New Norway	2	Magrath	2
Gundy	3	Onoway	3	Neapolic	1
Monitor	2	Rainer	2	North Star	1
Munson	3	Valhalla Center	1	Pebrach	2
New Brigden	2	Whitecourt	3	Raymond	5
Provost	4	Bonanza	3	Valleyview	3
Badheart	2	Clairmont	4	Warner	2
Bassano	2	Drumheller	6	Woking	2
Hanna	2	East Coulee	1	Red Deer	3
Hythe	2	Fairview	2	Vermilion	3
Lloydminster	5	Hays	2	Beaverlodge	3
				Total:	94

54. Lethbridge Herald, news from southern Alberta community centers for the 1930's. Reports from Coaldale mention visits of Mennonites to Coaldale from various Alberta centers.

55. Compiled by author from Vertreterversammlung for the 1930's, General Conference Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren Yearbooks, 1934-38 and from correspondence with Mennonites in the different districts.

their isolation from Mennonite influence.[56]

In contrast to the scattering of many Russländer in their endeavor to acquire land during the 1930's, the extremely conservative Old Colony Mennonites were able to establish a rather compact settlement some 350 miles north of Edmonton. The first of these settlers came from Saskatchewan and consisted of those who had been unable to join the exodus to Mexico and Paraguay prompted by the school controversy and the nationalist sentiment arrayed against a seemingly unassimilable group.[57] During the 1940's some of those who had migrated to Mexico returned to Canada to strengthen the colony in northern Alberta.

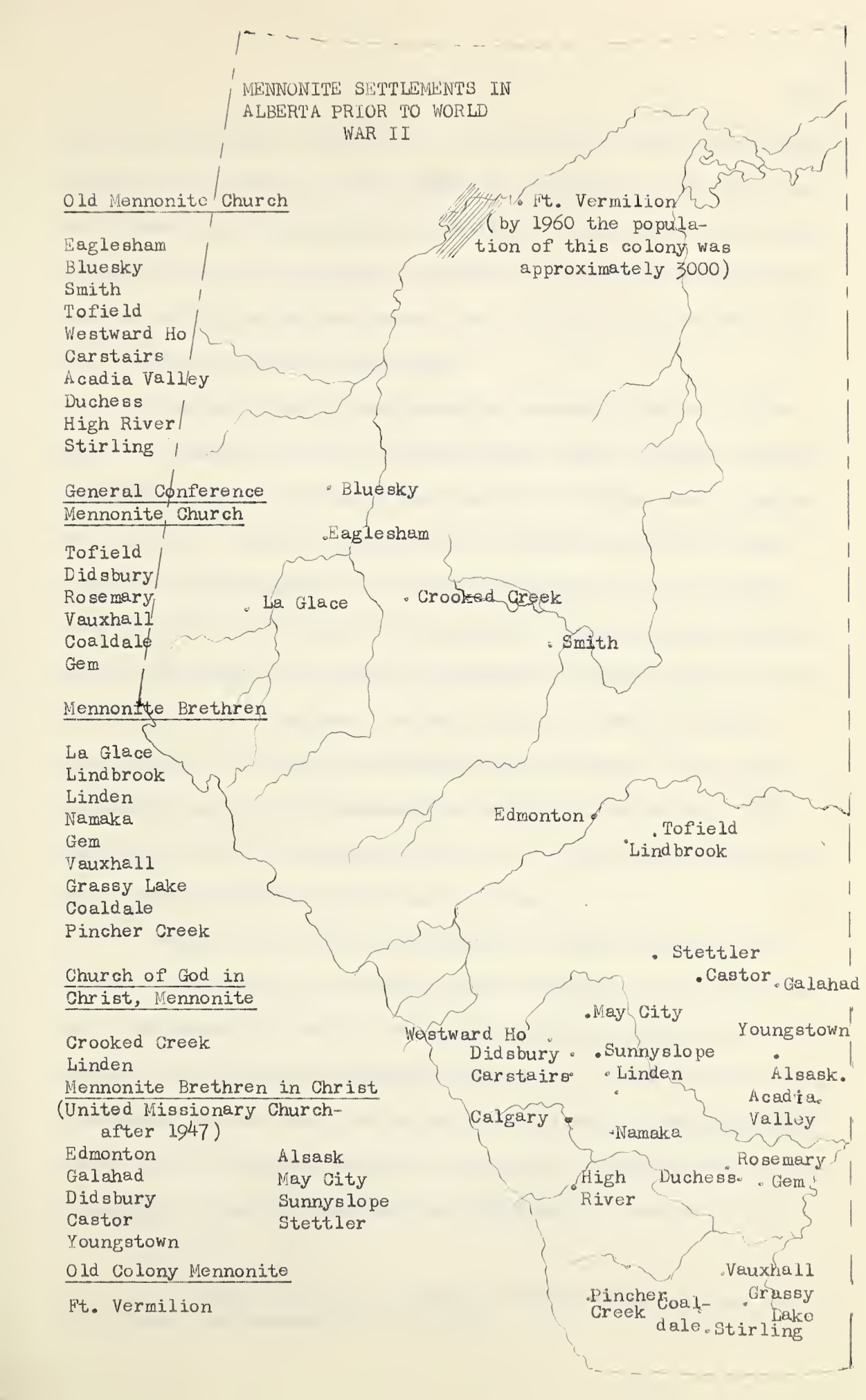
Those of the Old Colony group of Manitoba who had settled in Saskatchewan both before and after World War I and did not join the exodus in the 1920's adopted another approach to the influence of government controlled schools. Great care was exercised in the homes to ensure that pre-school youngsters learned no English. Some parents endeavored to keep children home contrary to prevailing laws while most sought by various means to discourage academic progress in their children.[58] Although the teachers in these communities were generally General Conference Mennonites or Mennonite Brethren the children were instructed by their elders not to cooperate academically with these "progressives". Consequently by the 1930's very few children in these colonies successfully completed even the first

---

56. Information obtained from correspondence with Mennonites in these districts.

57. See Chapter 3, p. 111, above.

58. Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Nov. 7, 1929; Interview with J. Friesen, Hague, Saskatchewan, who has in his possession school records and documents.


MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS IN ALBERTA PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II
Old Mennonite Church
Eaglesham
Bluesky
Smith
Tofield
Westward Ho
Carstairs
Acadia Valley
Duchess
High River
Stirling
General Conference Mennonite Church
Tofield
Didsbury
Rosemary
Vauxhall
Coaldale
Gem
Mennonite Brethren
La Glace
Lindbrook
Linden
Namaka
Gem
Vauxhall
Grassy Lake
Coaldale
Pincher Creek
Church of God in Christ, Mennonite
Crooked Creek
Linden
Mennonite Brethren in Christ (United Missionary Church- after 1947)
Edmonton
Galahad
Didsbury
Castor
Youngstown
Alsask
May City
Sunnyslope
Stettler
Old Colony Mennonite
Ft. Vermilion
Ft. Vermilion (by 1960 the population of this colony was approximately 3000)
Bluesky
Eaglesham
La Glace
Crooked Creek
Smith
Edmonton
Tofield
Lindbrook
Stettler
Castor
Galahad
May City
Youngstown
Westward Ho
Didsbury
Sunnyslope
Carstairs
Linden
Alsask
Acadia Valley
Calgary
Namaka
Rosemary
High River
Duchess
Gem
Vauxhall
Grassy Lake
Pincher Creek
Coal-dale
Stirling

two or three grades. Thus, with a concentration on the use of Plattdeutsch in the homes, on the playgrounds and often in the classroom; with parents impressing upon their children the dangers of the government controlled curriculum, and with an environment solidly Mennonite, the Old Colony settlements had, by 1930, deviated very little from their extreme conservatism.

When the drought accentuated the economic distress in the prairies, members of the Old Colony groups, eager to escape "worldly" innovations began a migration into the Fort Vermilion area of northern Alberta.[59] The five men who led this migration left the Hague district of Saskatchewan in the fall of 1932 and after an arduous trip by boat up the Peace River, spent the winter with some hunters on the north bank of the river approximately 30 miles south west of Fort Vermilion. Throughout the 1930's others of the Old Colony group helped to enlarge and strengthen the settlement. Here once again they could live in comparative isolation from society. The only contact with the outside world was by plane, boat, or dog team, the nearest railroad being 275 miles distant.

While the Old Colony settlement was being strengthened in numbers and enjoying its isolation, other Mennonite groups, particularly the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites strove to hold their scattered settlements together. To the problem of establishing landless families was added the burden of the Reiseschuld While the debt weakened Mennonite churches by compelling many of the Russländer to take up farms wherever these could be secured, regard-

---

59. Interview with J. Friesen of Hague; Correspondence and interviews with teachers in the colony.

less of location or consequent isolation from Mennonite congregations or settlements, it also helped to weld together and thus strengthen existing Mennonite settlements in that it constituted a challenge to unity of effort in liquidating the debt and preserving the Mennonite reputation.

The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization impressed upon Mennonites the fact that the Reiseschuld was not an insured debt, nor was it a debt in the ordinary sense of that term. It had not arisen through business transactions which looked to a profit, rather it had arisen through relief action aimed at saving lives.[60] The debt was to be considered not only as a debt of an individual but also as a debt of the Mennonite society; not only the head of the family was responsible for it but the entire family must assume the obligation.[61]

In Alberta various methods were employed in order to stimulate payment. In the Vertreterversammlungen (Mennonite conventions) of the 1930's a representative of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization was always present. On most occasions David Toews, chairman and C. F. Klassen, collector, gave reports and attempted to arouse enthusiasm by making an emotional appeal to the "honor of the Mennonites".[62] They constantly stressed the fact that C.P.R. credit had been made possible by the "honorable" dealings of the 1870 immigrants with the Canadian government at that time.

---

60. Vertreterversammlung, 1936, p. 28.
61. Ibid., 1936, p. 28.
62. Ibid., 1935, p. 9.

Perhaps the greatest appeal to Mennonites to unite their efforts in a concerted drive to liquidate the Reiseschuld was made in the late summer of 1937. Sir Edward Beatty who was planning a visit to Calgary and Lethbridge had expressed the desire to see a Mennonite settlement in Alberta. Mennonite leaders of Coaldale, the largest Mennonite settlement in Alberta, thereupon invited Beatty, Colonel J. S. Dennis, who had been in retirement since 1930 in Victoria, B.C., W. M. Neil, vice-president of the C.P.R., T. O. F. Herzer, chairman of the Canada Colonization Association, Senator Buchanan of Alberta and Mr. Elton, Mayor of Lethbridge, to a meeting scheduled for September 19.

At this meeting Rev. B. B. Janz and Rev. David Toews reviewed the whole story of the Mennonite escape from Russia. They portrayed the C.P.R. as the savior of the 20,201 Mennonites who had entered Canada in the 1920's. Mennonite leaders and laymen also expressed deep gratitude toward the C.P.R., the government and the people of Canada for making possible this new home in a land of liberty, security and peace.[63]

Following the addresses by Mennonite leaders, Sir Edward Beatty and Colonel Dennis spoke to the large Mennonite assembly. Beatty said that the manner in which Mennonites of western Canada were repaying their obligations was ample justification for what the C.P.R. had done.[64] This was borne out also by Colonel Dennis

---

63. Mennonitische Rundschau, Dec. 12, 1938. Interview with J. B. Janz, Coaldale who has in his possession copies of addresses by Janz and Toews.

64. Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Oct. 1, 1937.

who indicated that the first colonies were able to come to Canada because of a loan of a million dollars made by the Dominion government, every cent of which had been repaid. He pointed out that the prompt repayment of the loan had enabled him to persuade Sir Beatty to advance $2,000,000 to help bring in more Mennonites during the 1920's.[65]

This celebration and the words of commendation and challenge stirred many Mennonites to greater effort in repaying the Reiseschuld. As a result the Mennonites of Alberta in 1937 paid a total sum of $13,226.25, the highest figure paid in any one year before 1941 and that in spite of the prevailing depression.[66]

In the same year C. F. Klassen made arrangements with the C.P.R. that if any one of the 200 districts paid their entire debt a premium of 50% or more of the interest would be granted to that area.[67] This proved to be a new stimulus and the districts in Alberta, under the leadership of the Provincial Committee, set up a plan to eliminate the debt in three years.[68] All Mennonites were again reminded that they were debtors morally obligated to pay every dollar of it.[69] The Vertreterversammlung decided that pressure be brought to bear on debtors to pay in full and that the amount remaining, because of inability to pay, should be collected from the Mennonite society at the rate of $45.00 per family. This plan,

---

65. Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Oct. 1, 1937.

66. Vertreterversammlung, Nov. 1936, p. 26; Dec. 1946, p. 39.

67. Ibid., 1937, p. 31

68. Ibid., 1938, p. 14.

69. Ibid., 1937, pp. 7,8.

however, was not completed in three years and the debt was carried into the 1940's. But the efforts put forth to achieve the objective did place Alberta Mennonites first in liquidating their share of the Reiseschuld.

Such endeavors to foster unity of action and cooperation in the face of common problems in order to preserve the Mennonite name and the basic principles of faith was evident not only in the efforts to liquidate the Reiseschuld but also in the promotion of agriculture, business, education and relief activities.

Mennonite leaders recognized that the preservation of their faith in a new world depended in no small measure upon the prosperity of their farmers. For this reason the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization did everything possible to direct newcomers to good lands, assisted many in arranging purchase contracts, rendered financial assistance with the cooperation of the Kanadier farmers,[70] and advised settlers on suitable agricultural methods.[71] The emphasis on diversification was particularly noticeable. In this Mennonite leaders of Alberta reflected the influence of their farming experiences on the Russian steppes,[72] the impact of their brethren in southern Manitoba[73] and the effects of the depression on the west-

---

70. Vertreterversammlung, 1942, p. 25.

71. Protokoll der Delegiertenversammlung fur Manitoba in Winkler am 23-25 Juni, 1931; Protokoll der Delegiertenversammlung fur Saskatchewan am 29-30 Juni 1932 in Drake, Saskatchewan; these reports are in the records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon. Similar meetings were held in Coaldale and other centers in Alberta.

72. E. K. Francis, "The Adjustment of a Peasant Group to a Capitalistic Economy: The Manitoba Mennonites", Rural Sociology, 17, 1952, pp. 218-228.

73. J. Winfield Fretz, "The Renaissance of a Rural Community", Mennonite Life, Jan., 1946, pp. 14-17, p. 39.

ern staple economy. The 1930's taught western farmers the need for diversification beyond mere subsistence agricultural diversity. This would not have been feasible prior to the 1930's because of the absence of appropriate marketing facilities, markets, capital, and the lack of assurance of its success. Agricultural diversification demands processing plants backed by corporations which can guarantee results by engaging primary producers in contracts, as for example those existing between the companies and sugar beet growers in southern Alberta and Manitoba. Perhaps what was needed most was what the depression brought on, namely, increased government support and control, even in type and extent of production through bonuses, subsidies, price regulations, deficiency payments and other forms of protection against competition and unpredictable variables.

One of the first large scale endeavors to inform Mennonite settlers on the best farming methods and to impress upon them the advantages to be gained from diversification was the four day conference of Mennonites that convened at Coaldale on November 28, 1929.[74] Delegates to this convention represented chiefly the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite groups in Alberta and came from all sections of the province as far north as the Grande Prairie area. Agricultural experts addressed the conference. Superintendent Fairfield spoke on the contributions of experimental farms and informed the delegates on the latest developments in farming methods, livestock breeding, grain varieties

---

74. Lethbridge Herald, Nov. 28, 29, 30 and Oct. 2, 1929.

and soil treatment. Professor Murray of the Department of Agriculture spoke on dry farming in Alberta. He advised the convention on wheat growing, summer fallowing, weed control and prevention of soil drifting. Mr. A. Newman stressed the means and methods of dairying and hog production. Interest in the whole venture was such that another convention was arranged for December to which delegates brought questions supplied by their brethren in the respective districts.[75] At this conference Mr. M. L. Freng of Lethbridge discussed problems pertaining to irrigated farming and a representative of the Farm Bureau answered questions on dry farming, raising of livestock and the growing and storage of forage crops. Similar emphasis was placed on the discussion of agricultural problems at the Vertreterversammlungen which convened annually at Coaldale. These efforts did much to insure Mennonite settlers of the 1920's as well as others against failure resulting from faulty farming methods and indirectly strengthened Mennonitism generally.

Agricultural issues constituted only one of the reasons for which conventions were called. At most of these general meetings a variety of problems confronting Mennonite groups at the time came up for consideration. One of these was the challenge presented by existing non-Mennonite business concerns. Many of the Russländer who had engaged in non-agricultural occupations in Russia[76] saw

---

75. Lethbridge Herald, Dec. 3 and 4, 1929.

76. Walter Kuhn, "Cultural achievement of the Chortitza Mennonites", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, pp. 35-38; Adolf Ehrt, Das Mennonitentum in Russland: Von Seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart, Langensalza-Berlin-Leipzig, 1932, pp. 85 ff., 96.

in certain enterprises an opportunity for cooperation which would help bind together more closely the scattered settlements in a common endeavor. It would, they contended, evoke a loyalty to "things Mennonite" and would therefore serve to keep the faith alive despite the continual contact with the "world". The principle of cooperation had been very successfully applied in Russia and it was expected would be applicable also in Canada. No doubt the cooperative movement in Canada during the 1920's and the 1930's was a further inducement to Mennonites to organize similarly among themselves.[77] Economically this would enable Mennonites to capitalize on the earnings of their own brethren as well as on those of non-Mennonites in the community.

The first cooperative venture was the Doktor Verein (Medical Society) organized in 1926.[78] In 1932 the Society secured a contract with St. Michael's Hospital in Lethbridge, resulting in a reduction in the cost of medical services.[79] The plan, however, was not entirely satisfactory because many of the settlers could not speak English sufficiently to make themselves understood. Consequently, Mennonites were delighted when in 1933 Dr. D. L. Epp, one of their brethren, offered his services to the community on a con-

---

77. Protokoll der Delegierterversammlung fur Manitoba in Winkler, am 23-25 Juni, 1931, p. 8, available in the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization records, Saskatoon.

78. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Dec. 22, 1928.

79. Ibid., Apr. 5, 1932; Lethbridge Herald, Apr. 4, 1932.

tract basis.[80] A Mennonite graduate nurse, Miss Helen Martens, next suggested that Coaldale was prosperous enough to support a Mennonite hospital. The result was the formation in 1934 of the Coaldale Mennonite Hospital Society and the opening of a three-bed hospital.[81] The Membership in the society was restricted to Mennonite families.[82] Subsequently, with growth in membership a twelve-bed hospital was erected.

Although the medical association founded at Coaldale in 1926 was primarily the work of Russländer and based upon their experience in Russia,[83] it so impressed the whole Mennonite fellowship, including the Kanadier, that similar organizations were soon established in the other prairie provinces. By the close of the 1930's Mennonites had erected hospitals at Rosthern and Herbert in Saskatchewan and at Winkler, Altona, Steinbach and Winnipeg in Manitoba.[83a] The largest of these was the 64 bed Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg. In addition to these institutions, homes for the aged were opened in Rosthern and Winnipeg. Success in these undertakings gave Mennonites a sense of pride in their accomplishments and helped improve relations among the various factions within the brotherhood.

The Russländer, who were largely without means when they

---

80. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale. Oct. 1, 1933.

81. Ibid., Sep. 24, 1934.

82. Ibid., Nov. 18, 1935; Jan. 9, 1942.

83. D. A. Hamm,"Das Gesundheitswesen in Chortitza", Mennonite Life, Apr., 1955, pp. 84ff.

83a. Paul J. Schäfer, Woher? Wohin? Mennoniten! Altona, Manitoba, 1946, pp. 97-106.

arrived in Canada, early felt the need for some form of security against losses by fire. Several insurance schemes were proposed by Mennonites of the Coaldale district with the fundamental stipulations that benefit payments be small, that the system be entirely mutual, that no salaried officials or agents be engaged, and that the membership be limited to church members. In 1927 the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites of Alberta finally agreed to join the Canadian Mennonite Mutual Fire Insurance Company[83b] which had its headquarters at Plum Coulee, Manitoba. This organization was a non-profit enterprise and was neither registered nor incorporated until 1942. During the four years following 1927 four districts were organized in Alberta to facilitate expansion. All Mennonites were urged to join because, by so doing, they would enhance their own security and strengthen the organization financially. Such an expression of bearing one another's burdens, it was hoped, would also help to bind together the Mennonite brotherhood.

Another cooperative effort was the Coaldale Cannery begun in 1939 by a few enterprising Mennonites. Unfortunately, it functioned for only three years before it was forced to close down. The reasons for the failure are difficult to determine because no records are a-

---

83b. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Dec. 30, 1927.

vailable and information verbally given by individuals who were shareholders is not very reliable. It appears that poor management from its founding is chiefly responsible for the collapse of the venture.

The cannery was built as a cooperative effort and shares were sold at $20.00 each. Arrangements were made by which individuals might obtain shares by helping in the construction of the building. This proved an easy way to obtain shares and many took advantage of it. The result was that upon completion of the structure the funds on hand fell far short of the capital necessary to cover the number of shares given out. This financial weakness made necessary the installation of second-hand equipment which increased the cost of labour and maintenance. In addition, the cannery was erected on an extremely low site with the result that the construction of the drainage system was far higher than would otherwise have been the case. Taken together these factors assured failure from the very beginning of the undertaking. Three years after its construction the cannery was sold to the executive of the Coaldale Cheese Factory. Except for the processing of food for relief purposes during World War II, the plant served mainly as a storehouse for dairy produce.

A much more popular enterprise among Mennonites has been the manufacture of cheese. The Russländer had become familiar with creameries and cheese factories in Russia where they had their own cooperative establishments of this kind.[84] The first Mennonite cheese factory in Alberta was erected by the settlers of the Swalwell area in 1933. By 1936 the factory was financially well estab-

---

84. Vertreterversammlung, 1938, p. 21

lished and prospering.[85] The second cheese factory was opened by Mennonites in Coaldale in 1937.[86] This too was a cooperative enterprise with shareholding privileges limited to Mennonites. Those who delivered milk to the factory were to become shareholders on the following basis:-those with one cow were to pay a fee of twenty-five cents; those with two cows must buy a quarter share at $5.00; those with three or four cows must buy a half share at $10.00; and those with six cows must buy one share for $20.00.[87] The factory soon became too small and a new building was erected in 1939 while the old building was converted into an egg-grading station and a locker plant. In addition to these, the cheese cooperative entered two other business ventures, a poultry feed retail store and a lumber yard. Mennonites built cheese factories also at Didsbury and Rosemary in 1938 and 1939 respectively.

The cheese from these factories has won some distinction at agricultural fairs and exhibitions. In 1940 the Canadian Cheddar cheese from the Coaldale factory placed second at Edmonton, third at Calgary and sixth among one hundred contestants at Brandon.[88] In the same year this product placed first at the Canadian Pacific Exhibition at Belleville, Ontario.[89] In 1946 and 1951 the Coaldale plant won the George W. Scott Trophy for the Ideal Cheese Factory and for the years 1958 to 1961 held the Department of Agriculture Trophy for Quality Cheese Improvement.[89a] These and similar achievements reinforced the conviction of Mennonite

---

85. Vertreterversammlung, 1935, p. 20

86. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, July 26, 1937.

87. Vertreterversammlung, 1938, p. 22.

88. Lethbridge Herald, July 24, 1940.

89. Ibid., Dec. 19, 1940.

89a. Information from Jacob J. Klassen, Manager of the Coaldale Cheese Factory Cooperative, Ltd.

leaders that cooperative effort could produce success, arouse a pride among Mennonites in their own accomplishments, stregthen the "we-feeling", and help preserve the Mennonite faith.

As in business enterprise, so in matters of education and language, Mennonite leaders sought to co-ordinate the activities of the scattered church groups in order to give strength and unity to the whole Mennonite society. The Vertreterversammlungen which annually brought together delegates from all Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite churches in the province did much to encourage a united effort among Mennonites to preserve their faith in the face of challenges confronting them. These Vertreterversammlungen were supplemented by the annual Northwestern Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite conferences which were attended by delegates from all the churches of these two groupings in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba. There were also many more localized meetings of pastors, Sunday School teachers and superintendents, youth society leaders and music directors. At such meetings the problems, policies and promotion schemes came under review. Similar conferences were held by the Old Mennonites as well as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.

Among the many matters discussed at these conventions was the influence upon Mennonites of the public schools, the religious radio broadcasts and the evangelistic and revival campaigns conducted by other religious bodies. Mennonite leaders also expressed concern over the number of their youth who were being attracted to Bible camps held by various sects and religious schools in the province. Another cause for anxiety was the division between the older and younger gen-

erations over the use of the English language.[90]

All Mennonite groups feared the impact of the public schools in transforming attitudes, traditions and even the fundamentals of their faith. The most direct action to counteract this was taken in 1935 by the settlers around Coaldale when they sought information regarding the founding and operation of their own school. In January, 1936 Rev. B. B. Janz went to Edmonton to investigate the privileges open to minority groups in educational matters.[91] They learned from Premier Aberhart that they had the right to operate their own private school on condition that they submitted to Departmental supervision and used the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education.[92] They were also informed that the private school would get no governmental support and that parents sending their children to the school would still be required to pay the tax for the support of the local public school. Depression conditions, the cost of church extension work and the pressure of the Reiseschuld made extra financial burdens impossible and the plan was dropped until a more opportune time. The Second World War once again postponed reconsideration of the project until 1944.

In the meantime, to strengthen their youth against the influence of the public schools, the Russländer, including both the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites, employed the methods used by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Old Mennonites. They

---

90. Annual reports of the Vertreterversammlungen, 1930 to 1938.

91. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Jan. 11, 1936.

92. Ibid., Feb. 13, 1936.

placed renewed emphasis upon evening schools at which children and Mennonite youth were taught religion. These schools functioned from October to the end of March and were conducted in the local churches, halls or homes. Where the Mennonite settlement was too scattered or small and transportation facilities limited, such schools were impracticable. In such districts the parents were expected to provide the religious instruction in the home. By 1937 evening Bible schools for youth as well as adults and summer vacation Bible schools for children were functioning in the larger Mennonite settlements.[93] The response to these was described as encouraging. These activities were supplemented by the Jugendverein (youth society) which featured a religious program every Sunday night.[94] The interest of the young generation was also captured by annual music festivals which were held at various Mennonite churches in the province. Under favorable weather and road conditions youth groups would also conduct services in the homes of Mennonites who lived in districts where there was no local Mennonite congregation. Churches were encouraged to build up a library and promote subscriptions to Mennonite periodicals such as the Jugendblatt, Zionsbote, Mennonitische Rundschau, and Der Bote.[95] All these year round activities were supplemented by revival and evangelistic meetings which were usually held during the summer months under better road and weather conditions.

---

93. Northwestern District conference of the Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1937, p. 46; 1939, p. 45; General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1937, p. 117.

94. Gedenk und Dankfeier des 25--jaehrigen Bestehens der Coaldale Mennoniten Broeder Gemeinde am 27 Mai, 1951, pp. 61-64.

95. I. I. Regehr, "Die Vertreterversammlung in Alberta", Der Bote, Sep. 18, 1935, p. 5.

During the 1930's the Bible School movement added a new challenge to Mennonite efforts to preserve their faith and tradition. Of the sects that originated Bible institutes during this period the Mennonites feared most the influence of those whose doctrinal position was not widely different from their own. These included the Evangelical Free Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Prophetic Baptist movement founded by William Aberhart in 1927.[96] From 1929 to 1936 no fewer than twelve such schools were established in Alberta and Saskatchewan.[97] To the influence of these must be added six others which had arisen during the 1920's of which the Prairie Bible Institute was the largest, rivalled in Saskatchewan by the Briercrest Bible Institute.[98] Both these were undenominational. These schools did not confine their student bodies to prospective ministers but accepted anyone wishing to increase his or her knowledge of the scriptures. They attracted large numbers of students because they were closely integrated into the rural social structure of the prairies. The fact that these schools were situated in smaller centers and confined their sessions to the winter months enabled farm youth to find a recreational and social outlet during the slack season of the year. The cost of attending these schools was very low. This was particularly true of schools like Prairie Bible Institute which operated its own farm and provided the simplest living quarters. Every spring and summer the different schools sent out choirs, quartets and trios, usually accompanied by an instructor, on extensive

---

96. W. E. Mann, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, Toronto, 1955, pp. 20ff.

97. Ibid., p. 83.

98. Ibid., p. 13

preaching tours. Teams from denominational schools generally restricted their itinerary to their own churches but those from undenominational schools conducted meetings in any church that opened its doors to them, always emphasizing that it was not their intention to draw anyone away from his or her church affiliation. An additional attraction was the literature published by these Bible institutes and distributed widely by students and itinerant preachers.[99]

Mennonite leaders expressed concern over the appeal of the undenominational Bible schools to Mennonite youth. In 1935 at a Northern District Conference, A. G. Janzen, one of the Mennonite leaders, urged the delegates to impress upon their local assemblies the great necessity of establishing more Bible schools. "Many of our young people", he pointed out, "are receiving invitations from other schools. Some are attending these English schools and are losing their humble faith by studying false doctrines. Many of those who attend these schools are losing their simple Mennonite way of life."[100] Similar warnings were voiced at subsequent conventions[101] with the results that by 1937, despite depression conditions, twelve Bible schools were established in Alberta and Saskatchewan.[102] The La Glace Bible school was erected in 1935 to serve the Mennonites of the Peace River area. At Gem the Bethesda Bible Institute, established in 1933, attracted Mennonite young people from the west central section of the province. The Mennonite

---

99. Mann, op. cit., pp. 82-112; the author recalls reading literature from schools like Prairie Bible Institute which came into the home regularly free of charge. This was true of many other Mennonite homes; information obtained from libraries of these schools and interviews with staff and faculty members.

100. Northern District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren, Yearbook, 1935, pp. 36, 37. Translated from the German by author.

101. Ibid., 1936, p. 45; 1937, p. 19; 1938, p. 23.

102. Ibid., 1939, p. 45.

settlements at Didsbury, Carstairs and Tofield enjoyed the services of three Bible schools. The Mountainview Bible College established in 1926 by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, experienced a remarkable increase in support and enrollment during the 1930's.[103] The Old Mennonites continued their circuit Bible schools while the General Conference Mennonites of Alberta founded the Menno Bible Institute at Didsbury in 1937. In addition to these schools the Coaldale Bible Institute, which originated with the Bible classes begun at Coaldale in 1919, was by 1933 attracting so many students that a new structure had to be erected the following year.[104] Through the influence of these institutes many Mennonite youth were prevented from attending other schools and for this Mennonite leaders were deeply grateful.[105]

During the 1930's the new religious principles which were penetrating the homes through the medium of radio constituted another challenge to the Mennonite faith. The evangelistic broadcasts of Aberhart, Lowry and later, Sawtell and Carlson obtained a remarkable response. These programs were simple, entertaining, lively, often built around one personality, and focused on the scriptures. Aberhart's broadcasts in 1935 reached an audience of approximately 350,000.[106] The use of radio was by this time so widespread that Aberhart was able to build up contacts in practically every part of the province. In fact, without the penetration of the isolated farms and small villages by means of his

---

103. Catalogue of the Mountainview Bible College, 1940, p. 3

104. Gedenk und Dankfeier des 25--jaehrigen Bestehens der Coaldale Mennoniten Broeder Gemeinde am Mai 27, 1951, p. 55.

105. Northern District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren, Yearbook, 1938, p. 23; General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1939, p. 45.

106. Mann, op. cit., pp. 22, 23, 114-126, 102-106.

broadcasts Aberhart could hardly have originated the Social Credit movement.[107] The radio was, no doubt, partly responsible for the spread of urban tastes and produced a new restlessness concerning the old ways. Dr. Oscar Lowry, who began broadcasting in 1938, had a particular appeal to Mennonites. His ministry was supplemented by literature which was read in many Mennonite homes for some years. Like the teams sent out by undenominational Bible institutes, these radio preachers carefully avoided reference to doctrines peculiar to any one denomination. Thus Mennonites never heard these preachers discuss such topics as non-resistance, taking the oath, or modes of baptism. The emphasis on separation from everything "worldly" had a particular appeal to Mennonites. Some of their church leaders early warned that these radio programs and itinerant preachers could by the very fact that their teachings were so similar to those of the Mennonites, undermine the loyalty to things Mennonite and build up a sympathy toward or an attachment to other religious organizations.[108] Although church leaders expressed concern over the use of the radio in Mennonite homes, they recognized that little could be done to prevent it. Ministers warned their congregations, however, of the "dangers" of radio, especially where its use was not under careful parental supervision. Some even suggested that to counteract the influence of radio Mennonites should produce their own religious broadcasts, but the Men-

---

107. John A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, Toronto, 1959, pp. 258-289.

108. Earl Meyers, "Mennonite Radio Broadcasting 1936-1951" unpublished manuscript in Goshen College Library, Goshen, Indiana, 1951; Andrew R. Shelley, "Mennoniteson the Air", Mennonite Life, Apr. 1952, pp.65-71; J. G. Rempel, "Mennonites on the Air in Western Canada", Ibid., July, 1952, pp.125-127; Frank H. Epp, "Radio as it should be", Ibid., Jan. 1959, pp. 15-21.

nonites of Western Canada were apparently not ready to assume such a responsibility until the late 1940's.[109] The burden of the Reiseschuld, the problem of establishing their churches and Bible institutes and finally, the advent of the war with its attendant antipathy toward pacifism and everything German, rendered Mennonite broadcasting impracticable.

The problem of preserving the German language, at least for a time, concerned mainly the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites although the Holdemanites still exerted efforts in the same direction. The Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ had adopted the use of English in both secular and religious affairs even before they came west.[110] In the face of this situation the Russländer explained that it was not their desire to preserve the German language because it was a fundamental part of the Mennonite faith as many appeared to believe. The teaching of German, at least for some years, was considered imperative in order to prevent a division within the church between the young and the old. To accomplish this the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites used German in Sunday Schools, church services, youth programs and evening Bible classes. They promoted the retention of German by printing books, religious periodicals and church bulletins in that language. In addition, Mennonite leaders urged their children and young people to attend Saturday schools at which German was taught with the Bible and German grammar texts as a

---

109. J. G. Rempel, "Mennonite on the Air in Western Canada", Mennonite Life, July, 1952, pp. 65-71.

110. Chapter one, p. 42, above.

basis. In the homes children were expected to communicate either in high German or Plattdeutsch (low German).

By 1939, despite these precautionary measures, young people were experiencing difficulty understanding the German Sunday School lessons.[111] A survey made in 1938 respecting the use of German in religious exercises revealed that of all regular church programs conducted in 63 congregations, one church group reported the use of English for the youth program and three reported the use of English in Sunday School classes for children under fourteen years of age.[112] An increasing desire on the part of children and young people to use English in preference to German became evident in the almost involuntary resort to English in conversation among children in Mennonite homes.

Generally the impressions made upon Canadians by Mennonites who had come in during the 1920's were quite favorable. According to the Manitoba Free Press Mennonite achievement was remarkable. It commented: "The Mennonites have already built up a reputation enviable in many particulars. They are sober and industrious, and in living up to their tenets, include the economic implications of social welfare."[113] In a similar way the chairman of a school board at Boissevain, Manitoba, gave an unqualified recommendation of the Mennonites in the Witness and Canadian Homestead on the basis of his ex-

---

111. Northern District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren, Yearbook, 1939, p. 45.

112. General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1939, p. 37.

113. "Admission of Mennonites", Manitoba Free Press, Nov. 7, 1929.

perience with the immigrants.[114] He said:-

> There is lots of room for any honest, God-fearing, hard-working people such as the Mennonites are, that are coming to our country now. I have been living in southern Manitoba for nearly 25 years, and during my life have been in contact with a great variety and number of people. During the last five years there have located and settled in this district some 50 or 60 Mennonite families. I have had considerable dealings with them in connection with our school, being chairman of a school board, where nine-tenths of the pupils attending are Mennonites, and I am also in touch with two other district schools where numbers of the children attending are Mennonites. The teachers report in all schools that the Mennonite children are good students, give very little trouble, and are most anxious to learn the English language and become good British subjects.

The Montreal Daily Herald[115] likewise paid tribute to the Mennonites:-

> The Mennonites according to the Calgary Herald, are among the most successful settlers in the southern irrigation districts. They pay their debts and they ask no public assistance because they believe in hard work and in self-denial when times are bad. They have largely repaid the cost incurred in bringing them to Canada, and the bill will ultimately be settled in full. In other words, they are good citizens, not seeking something for nothing.

---

114. David Baskerville, "Best of Citizens", Witness and Canadian Homestead, Jan. 22, 1930.

115. "Mennonites in Canada", Montreal Daily Herald, Oct. 12, 1937.

CHAPTER FIVE

New Challenges Created by the War (1939-1946)

The renewal of hostilities in Europe faced Mennonites with new challenges especially with respect to language, citizenship, military service, immigration and relief. In each of these areas Mennonites again struggled to preserve their faith and ways of life in an environment that was not always sympathetic or understanding of Mennonite intentions.

The immigrants of the 1920's had been urged to make Canada their real homeland. During the early thirties Mennonite leaders had reported "that practically all those who have been here for five years have become Canadian citizens. The Mennonite immigrants will ever take an active part in the building of the Canadian nation".[1] The newcomers of the 1920's had been repeatedly reminded that if they had declared their citizenship vows before God and man, then they ought also to become citizens of Canada at heart.[2]

Such urging was necessary particularly because of the attraction of German language and culture for a sector of these immigrant groups. In the inferior culture of the Russian environment the identification of German, religion and culture had developed quite naturally as Mennonites strove to retain their identity and

---

1. Dietrich Epp and J. J. Thiessen, A Memorandum of the Central Committee of Mennonite Immigrants, representing the Mennonites who came to Canada since 1923, to the Saskatchewan Royal Commission, April 15, 1930.

2. Ein Schulmeister, "Sind wir dem Namen oder dem Herzen nach Bürger Canadas geworden" Der Bote, X Dec. 20, 1933, pp. 1,2.

preserve their way of life. This identification of German with religion had been reinforced as an essential concept of Mennonite culture during the Russification program following 1870. Increasingly, after the turn of the century, Russian government measures and later the revolution had aroused among Mennonites an admiration of German culture. Already during the 1930's church leaders had recognized that among the Russländer were those who, in the face of existing influences, would identify themselves with the German race and nation.

Aspirations of this kind became evident when matters respecting German language and literature were discussed at district, provincial and interprovincial meetings.[3] The desire to preserve the German language and literature led some Russländer to a close cooperation with non-Mennonite organizations whose purpose was the promotion of German culture. Through associations such as the Verein für das Deutschtum im A usland (Society for Germanism abroad) with headquarters at Stuttgart, Germany, Mennonites were able to secure books for their homes and church libraries. The German consul for western Canada, Dr. H. Seelheim, spoke frequently at immigrant meetings. Bernard Bott, chairman of the German- Canadian Central Committee and editor

---

3. C. F. Klassen, "Der Weg der praktischen Hilfe", Der Bote, Feb. 18, 1931, p.1; A. J. Fast, "Unterstirtzt die deutschen Lehranstalten", Ibid., Feb.4, 1931, p.3; P.A. Rempel, "Warum wir die Gemeinschaftschule Brauchen?" Aug.2, 1931, pp.3,4. Similar articles are in the following issues of Der Bote:-Feb. 19, 1930, p. 2; Apr. 23, 1930, p. 2; June 18, 1930, p. 2; Oct. 1, 1930, pp. 3,4; Oct. 8, 1930, pp. 1,3; Oct. 15, 1930, pp. 1,3; Nov. 26, 1930, pp. 1,2; Dec. 31, 1930, pp. 1,2; Mar. 18, 1931, p. 1; Apr. 1, 1931, p.1; May 6, 1931, p.2; Aug. 12, 1931, pp. 3,4; Jan. 6, 1932, p. 1; Dec. 14, 1932, pp. 1,2; June 7, 1933, p.4; Aug. 23, 1933, p. 3; Apr. 25, 1934, p. 4; May 30, 1934, p. 3; Oct. 10, 1934, p. 2.

of Der Courier, participated actively in promoting the annual Deutschetag (German day) of Saskatchewan. Societies, interested in promoting Germanism, concentrated particularly on the youth of predominantly German communities. They saw the young generation as a Pflanzstätte[4] (seed bed) of German thought, feeling and faith. A Mennonite youth society in Winnipeg was organized with the express purpose of preserving and even furthering the German language and cultural heritage.[5]

The German literature that was placed into the hands of many Mennonites emphasized the excellence of German religious and cultural life[6] and associated everything good with Deutschtum (Germanism).[7] This emphasis prompted many Mennonites to search for racial identification, with some insisting on Dutch origins and others decrying such Holländerei (Dutchism) and upholding German Kultur (culture), German Volk (race), and the German Reich (state).[8]

---

4. J. P. Claszen, "Grundfrage der Jugendvereinsarbeit", Der Bote, Mar. 19, 1930; p.1; Mar. 26, 1930, pp. 1,2.

5. H. Wall, "Ein gehengesnes Konzert des Deutsch-Mennonitischen Jugendbundes", Ibid., Apr. 2, 1930, p. 2; G. H. Peters, "Der Kampf um die Deutsche Sprache" Ibid., June 24, 1936, p. 7.

6. ZMIK, "Bücher für den Unterricht," Ibid., June 10, 1931, p. 5; D. P. Esau, "Was erwarten unsere Gemeinden von den Elementar- und Hochschulen in Religion und Deutsch", Ibid., June 15, 1938, pp.1,2.

7. K. W. Gruppe, "Unser Mädchenschulgedenktag am 2 Januar, 1938", Ibid., Jan. 19, 1938, pp. 1,2;"Die Deutsche Frau raucht nicht", Ibid., June 21, 1933, p. 4;"Sei Deutsch", Ibid., June 21, 1933, p. 4; A. Koop, "Bericht von Springridge und Glenwood", Ibid., Mar. 1, 1933, p. 6; Ein Gast, "Hague", Ibid., Apr. 19, 1934, p. 3.

8. J. H. Janzen, "Deutsches", Ibid., Mar. 15, 1939, pp. 1,2; G. Toews, "Ich wünsche zu dieser Angelegenheit die Tat", Ibid., Feb. 17, 1937, pp. 2,3; W. Quiring, "Artfremdes Blut ist Gift", Ibid., Apr. 15, 1936, pp. 2,3; other articles of a similar nature are in the following issues of Der Bote: May 23, 1934, p. 2; Sep. 12, 1934, p. 2; Feb. 6, 1935, p. 4; Aug. 7, 1935, p. 1.

Some Mennonites became even more closely attached to "things German" as a result of several other developments. While in 1929 Canada and other western countries refused to admit the Mennonite refugees, President Hindenburg responded very generously.[9] His act was deeply appreciated especially by those in Canada whose relatives had thus been liberated. When Hindenburg died a group of Winnipeg Mennonites expressed their sympathies by sending a wreath for his grave.[10]

When Hitler came to power some Mennonites hailed the event as an hour of liberation for Germany from the political and economic troubles that had resulted from the Treaty of Versailles and the Communist International.[11] According to one sympathizer "We don't consider Germans to be angels ... but even so, we thank God, that at least a man has been found, who consolidated the nationalistic idea, who had the courage to get rid of the social-democratic rot, and the Communist insanity ..."[12] A similar view was expressed by C. G. Schmidt

---

9. "Soviet re-embarks two thousand Mennonites for Siberia: Germany agrees to accept 4000", New York Times, Nov. 22, 1924, p. 16; "First group crosses East Prussian border, welcomed", Ibid., Dec. 3, 1929, p. 8; "Hindenburg gives $50,000 to Emigrants", Ibid., Nov. 20, 1929, p. 5; "Mennonites demand permission to leave Russia and join brethren in Canada in order to preserve faith and tradition", Ibid., Oct. 13, 1929, p.8; "Reichtag votes sum for relief", Ibid., Dec. 19, 1929, p. 5.

10. C.A.De Fehr, "Unsere Winnipeger", Der Bote, Feb. 13, 1935, p. 5.

11. A.J. Fast, "Wasgeht in Deutschland vor?", Ibid., May 10, 1933, p. 5; May 24, 1933, p. 6; Gerhard Toews, "Was ein Laie so ausdem politischen Teich Fischt", Ibid., Dec. 19, 1934, p. 4; "Deutschlands Erwachen", Ibid., May 3, 1933, p. 4; D. C. Zentralkomitee, "Der Vierte Deutschetag", Ibid., July 7, 1933, p. 4; Engen Keuhneman, "Das neue Deutschland", Ibid., Nov. 15, 1933, p. 4.

12. C. F. Klassen, "Gegen die geislose Judenhetze", Ibid., Apr. 19, 1933, p. 2. Translated from German by the author.

who described the Third Reich as the world's greatest security against communism.[13] He explained:

> If, perhaps, all details of National Socialism are not intelligible to us, yet we know that this movement is the greatest bulwark against international communism, and already, on that account, we, who have experienced communism, are compelled to express the greatest respect for this movement without thereby coming into conflict with our duties as citizens...No one thinks of importing pure National Socialism into Canada. But only a similar direction can bring a halt to the drive of international communism on this continent.

In his anxiety to counteract the influence of communism and preserve the German name and culture, Julius Heinricks urged German Canadians to join the Deutsche Bund.[14] He insisted that:

> A Christian who is a good citizen of his state will also be a loyal member of his race. If a spiteful press assails his race with lies and dirt, he will not restrain himself, but will freely and openly protect his race. In order to carry on this fight, men of like mind should band together and form unions and Bunds, which are permitted by the state. All who are German in origin and acknowledge themselves to be of German culture are welcome. To be German and to remain German is our object. ...
>
> If we desire to protect the foundations of the Canadian state, we must open the eyes of our fellow-citizens to the dangers that a bolshevizing of the world can bring.

A more intense sympathy for things German was expressed by Walter Quiring who outlined the distinction between state-loyalty and folk-loyalty as follows:[15]

> There is a loyalty, not only towards a state, but also towards God, towards one's wife, and towards one's own folk. These are not all the same. I can very well be loyal to the Canadian state, and at the same time be loyal to my German nationality. In what does loyalty to one's nationality consist? In my having the courage honourably and frankly to say

---

13. Mennonitische Rundschau, Mar. 1, 1939, p. 1. Translated by author.

14. Der Bote, Feb. 22, 1939, p. 4. Translated by author.

15. Ibid., Mar. 22, 1939, p. 3. Translated by author.

> to the Englishman, I will certainly always be loyal to the country in which I live, but I have no intention of becoming an Englishman. I intend to remain German, and I intend to have my children and children's children also remain German.

Others acclaimed Hitler as the leader who stopped the Communist advance, provided employment for millions, brought a return of prosperity to Germany and ended the factionalism in the church.[16] Some Mennonites who visited Germany returned with words of praise for the new administration which had achieved so much in a few years.[17]

In their expression of sympathy for Germany the Mennonites were by no means alone. Of all the ethnic groups in western Canada, exclusive of Mennonites, the Germans were perhaps the most vocal in their support of Hitler's regime and in their denunciation of communism. Most of the Germans in western Canada had come from Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Rumania. Having escaped from oppression in Soviet Russia, they were impressed with the anti-Communist pose of Nazi Germany prior to August, 1939 and responded to the stress of the German government on race, language and culture. Except for

---

16. Engen Keuheman, "Das neue Deutschland", Der Bote, Nov. 15, 1933, p. 4; C. A. De Fehr, "Greuel Propaganda im Ausland", Ibid., Apr. 26, 1933, p. 3; A. Reimer, "Gegen die geistlose Judenhetze", Ibid., Apr. 26, 1933, pp. 2,3; C. H. Friesen, "Haltet an der Muttersprocher und wenn's umden Dialekt ist", Ibid., Oct. 10, 1934, p. 2; Goebbels, "Kommunismus ohne Maske", Ibid.,Dec. 4, 1935, p. 5; H. Seelheim, "Aufruf zum deutschen Winterhilfswerk", Ibid., Dec. 18, 1935, pp. 4,5; G. Toews, "Was ein Laie so aus dem politischen Teich fischt", Ibid., Dec. 19, 1934, p. 4; P. Schulz, "Etwas über das Verhältnis der nationalsozialistischen Partei zur Kirche im Deutschen Reiche", Ibid., Feb. 28, 1934, p. 3; W. Quiring, "Der Deutsche Gruss", Ibid., Oct. 24,1934, p. 2.

17. G. Hege, "Wie ich Deutschland wiedersah", Ibid., Mar. 13, 1935, p. 2; N. J. Neufeld, "Alskanada Deutscher in Deutschland", Ibid., Feb. 12, 1936, pp. 2,3; Oswald J. Smith, "Mein Besuch in Deutschland", Oct. 28, 1936, p. 3; A. Kroeker, "Büchertisch", Ibid., Sep. 25, 1935, p. 6; J. H. Janzen, "Information", Ibid., Apr. 25, 1934, pp. 5,6; A. Kroeker, "Waffen der Gerechtigkeit", Ibid., Mar. 15,1939, p. 1.

these basic areas of agreement there existed some marked differences of opinion.

Der Nordwesten, a weekly paper published in Winnipeg and having a circulation in 1939 of approximately 9000, was very enthusiastic over the Nazi system in Germany. An editorial of January 25, 1939 described the year 1938 as the "happiest of all Germany's years", and continued:[18]

> What the future is to bring, we do not know, but with its great Leader, and with all the other eminent associates and assistants, the German nation which has become truly united for the first time in history, will proceed securely and bravely on its way.
>
> Let us hope that the editor is just as right in these words as he was in those with which, in 1933, after a visit in the Old Homeland, he concluded an editorial in Der Nordwesten: "I came home with the consciousness that the New Germany, firmly grounded in the nation and under the strong hand of a far-sighted government, had entered upon a victorious resurrection".

The same editor on May 31, 1939 voiced the demands of the Hitler Regime when he stated:[19]

> Germany once had colonies and needs them to-day! Her colonies are in other hands but Germany demands them back; she must have them, for the sake of national prestige, as sources of raw materials, and as space for settlement (Lebensraum).

No doubt Bernhard Bott's notorious Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada, founded in Winnipeg in 1935 by the German Consul, Dr. Seelheim, aroused much pro-Nazi sympathy. A typical example of the kind of material the editor presented to the reading public appeared in the issue of April 12, 1939.[20] In part the editorial read as follows:

> A government that in a few years leads millions of unemployed people back to work and bread and defends them from Bolshevism, that inspires its citizens with new courage, that

---

18. Der Nordwesten, Jan. 25, 1939, p. 2. Translated by author.
19. Ibid., May 31, 1939, p. 4. Translated by author.
20. Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada, Apr. 12, 1939, p. 1. Translated by author.

> works unceasingly for the upbuilding of a better country, certainly does more for our civilization than do those politicians who cannot cope with the economic and social problems of their own country but only boast about a "high standard of living", which applies only to a couple of preferred strata in society.

In his effort to unify all Germans in Canada, the editor argued that on the basis of their number and their contributions to Canadian growth and development, Canadian-Germans ought to stand on a par with French Canadians or other major groups.[21]

In its attempt to recruit the Germans of Canada in the interests of Nazi penetration, the Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada on December 30, 1936 published a plan for the creation of a Deutsche Bund (Union of all Germans) in Canada. The leader of the new organization was Hans Grabowsky, and its secretary was G. Hittler of Montreal.[22] In accordance with this four-year plan:

> All parents who belong to the Deutsche Bund must send their children to German schools with National Socialists as teachers ....
>
> Parents must send their children to youth groups of the Deutsche Bund. ....
>
> Every member of the Bund must be careful to buy newspapers, periodicals and books only in stores that are openly friends of the Third Reich.
>
> Every member of the Bund must demand German goods whenever possible.... The greater the demand, the greater will be the increase of German goods to Canada, and hence more foreign exchange will be made available to Germany.
>
> All members of the Bund must place themselves unconditionally behind their leaders in order that we may accomplish the task. In this spirit we greet all members of the Bund with Heil Hitler!

By 1939 the Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada had a circulation of approximately 6000, and the Deutsche Bund was boasting adherents in about 4 per cent of all German-Canadian homes.[23]

---

21. Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada, Feb. 15, 1939, pp. 1,3.

22. Ibid., Dec. 30, 1936, p. 4. Translated by author.

23. Watson Kirkconnell, "The European-Canadians in Their Press", Canadian Historical Society Report, 1940, p. 91.

Another pro-German movement that attracted wide attention was the National Unity Party, a fascist movement with Dr. Gabriel Lambert as organizer, Joseph Maurice Scott as commander, and Adrien Arcand as "Fuehrer".[24] All three of these leading figures were French-Canadians. Arcand boasted of his close association with the Nazi regime in Germany and talked freely of a political victory which would put his party into power at Ottawa. He even published a platform outlining the path his party would follow in building the New Canada as Hitler had resurrected the New Germany.[25] As a journalist Arcand made good use of literature of which his party organizer had an abundant supply in both English and French. Some of it was imported from Sir Oswald Mosley's headquarters in London.[26] In March of 1938 over 23,000 booklets were sold in Quebec alone.[27] The party leaders claimed a membership of approximately 85,000 in Quebec, 12,000 in Ontario, and an undetermined number of followers in the western provinces.[28] Actually the party lacked unity for there were two groups. The Quebec wing was under the direction of the three French-Canadians already mentioned, namely, Arcand, Lambert and Scott, and was known as the National Socialist Christian Party. In Ontario and the West Joseph Farr, an Irishman and a member of the Orange Order, became the avowed leader of a group of Nazi sympathizers known as the Canadian

---

24. Frederick Edwards, "Fascism in Canada", Maclean's Magazine, Apr. 15, 1938, p. 10; Leslie Roberts, "Will Quebec Turn Right", Canadian Magazine, Apr., 1939, pp. 8, 9, 45.

25. Adrien Arcand, "Does Canada Need Fascism", Country Guide, July, 1938, pp. 11, 44.

26. Edwards, op. cit., p. 11

27. Ibid., p. 15.

28. Ibid., p. 11; Roberts, op. cit., p. 8.

Nationalist Party. Serious efforts at unifying the two wings were thwarted by German aggression in Europe and finally by the advent of the war.[29]

Vocal fascist groups made their appearance also among such ethnic groups as the Ukranians and Italians. Most European-Canadians expressed strong affection for their respective countries of origin and showed keen interest in the political movements in these lands. As might be anticipated, many Ukranians in western Canada openly acclaimed Hitler as the liberator of the Ukranian nation until Germany's aggressive designs became apparent in 1938 and 1939. A similar reaction was evident among Italian-Canadians who were impressed with the achievements of fascism in Italy. Both these ethnic groups denounced communism and were critical of democracy and British foreign policy.[30]

It may at first thought appear surprising that the prevalence of such pro-German sentiments did not immediately call forth attempts on the part of Mennonite leaders to point out the incompatibility of the Mennonite and fascist ideologies. No doubt Hitler's opposition to communism was one of the main reasons why Mennonites, who had themselves suffered at the hands of communists, were so sympathetic to the new German regime. And when to this were added the economic and social achievements at a time when the western world was immersed in the depression, many Mennonites could not hide their admiration and respect for Germany. It was not until war was threatening and German militarism became obvious that pro-German sentiments began to evoke opposition among both the Kanadier and Russländer.

---

29. Edwards, op. cit., p. 15; Arcand, op. cit., p. 11.

30. Kirkconnell, Canada, Europe and Hitler, Toronto, 1939, p. 199.

Many Mennonites were made aware of Germany's aggressive intentions by the recruitment notices which Consul Seelheim was able to place in Mennonite periodicals on behalf of the Reich.[31] Such notices and the pro-German sentiment expressed by some Mennonites prompted church leaders to warn that involvement in German politics and policies could only lead to the ruin of the Mennonite non-resistant privileges.[32] In an article which appeared in several Mennonite papers B. B. Janz asked "Does Menno Simons belong among the National-Socialists?"[33] In another article J. B. Epp urged Mennonites to avoid the fatal mistake of exchanging the cross of Christ for the swastika.[34] In a similar manner J. G. Rempel reminded the German sympathizers that the church of Christ was not limited to racial groups or by geographical boundaries.[35] David Toews, through publications and addresses sought to impress upon Mennonites the necessity of a faith in Christ and the blood of Christ rather than a trust in the German Führer and the German blood.[36] With the deepening of tne crisis in Europe, Mennonite leaders, both in churches and in the press, increasingly deplored expressions of pro-Germanism

---

31. Deutsches General-Konsulat, "Uber die Erfassung der wehrflichtigen Staats angehörigen und über die Einstellung von Freiwilligen" Der Bote, June 14, 1939, p. 6; H. Seelheim, "Bekanntmachung", Ibid., Mar. 18, 1936, p. 5.

32. J. J. Hildebrand,"Notwendige Warnung", Ibid., Apr. 4, 1934, p. 2.

33. B. B. Janz, "Komt Menno Simons unter die Nationalsozialisten?" Ibid., Dec. 26, 1934, p. 1; B. B. Janz, "Bin ich Nationalsozialist? Bewahre!", Ibid., Jan. 11, 1939, p. 1. Translated from German by author.

34. J. B. Epp, "Und es wird gepredigt werden in aller welt...." Ibid., Mar. 21, 1934, p. 1.

35. J. G. Rempel,"Friedens bestrebungen", Ibid., Sep. 28, 1938, p. 4.

36. Jacob Toews, "Mennonitischer Deutscher order Deutscher Mennonit?" Ibid., Mar. 4, 1936, p. 3.

and emphasized the non-resistant principles of their faith.[37]

Many church leaders voiced concern as the pro-German element expressed its sympathies more openly. The communication between some Mennonites and German associations both in Canada and Germany became evident in the amount of National-Socialist literature and the Hitler photos that were circulating. Some Mennonites even participated in Brownshirt organizations[38] and a few became involved in a clash between Communists and Brownshirts in Winnipeg.[39] A further manifestation of strong pro-German sentiment was the actual enlistment of a few Mennonites in the Nazi cause and their departure for Germany.[40] It was also known that a number of Mennonites had purchased short-wave radio receivers and were listening to the Hitler speeches and were supporters of a pro-Nazi paper.[41]

After the aggressive intentions of the Hitler regime became apparent and especially after the outbreak of the war there was a change in non-Mennonite attitudes. Der Nordwesten which in its earlier issues had been enthusiastic in its praise of the Third Reich expressed indignation at the new Nazi-Soviet Pact.[42] The Deutsche

---

37. John Horsch, "Wehrlosigkeit und Feldprediger Dienst", Der Bote, Oct. 26, 1938, p.2; T.Epp, "Durfen Kinder Gottes sich am Kriege beteiligen?", Ibid., July 28, 1937 to Nov. 24, 1937.

38. Ein Leser, "Um Hohen Preis", Ibid., June 22, 1934, p.4.

39. Ibid.

40. Letter to editor of the Canadian Mennonite , Jan.7, 1962

41. "Of Twelve Winnipeg Mennonites in operation of Deutsche Zeitung, Nazi Paper, seven are still at liberty", Winnipeg Tribune, June 20, 1940.

42. Der Nordwesten, Sep. 6, 1939.

Zeitung fuer Canada was promptly suppressed after Canada declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939.[43] Der Courier, a weekly paper published in Regina and with a circulation of approximately 12,000 mostly among Roman Catholics, had never been strong in its praise of the Hitler regime because of its persecution of the church. Even before the war the editor urged Germans to be stedfast in their loyalty to the British crown but deplored the anti-Germanism that was so prevalent in so much of the Anglo-Canadian press.[44] The voice of the French-Canadian fascists was heard until Maurice Duplessis, premier of Quebec, called an election in 1939 on the provincial autonomy issue, the basis of which was the refusal of his government to participate in the war. It became apparent that the Nazis would interpret a victory on such a neutralist policy as evidence of Canadian national disunity. The French Liberal members of the Federal House of Commons, headed by Honorable Ernest Lapointe, threw their influence behind the cause and appealed to the electorate to defeat the Duplessis administration for the sake of Canadian unity. With the fall of the Duplessis government, the fascists became silent. It appears, therefore, that the movement had been a form of Quebec nationalism which aught to have been labelled provincialism although its leaders denied any such description.[45] Other expressions of pro-Germanism, such as those by Ukranians or Italians, likewise disappeared with the shift in public

---

43. W. Kirkconnell, "The European-Canadians in their Press", Canadian Historical Association Report, 1940, p. 89.

44. Der Courier, May 24, 1939--editorial.

45. Edwards, op. cit., p. 11

opinion following the advent of the war.

The manifestation of pro-Germanism among Mennonites before the outbreak of hostilities and the change in non-Mennonite attitudes brought on by the war, prompted opposition groups to interpret all use of the German language and even the adherence to German folk ways as evidence of sympathy for Germany. It caused the associated Boards of Trade of the Fraser Valley and the Lower Mainland to demand a stop to further acquisitions of land by Mennonites.[46] At Pincher Creek, Alberta where Mennonites had established a settlement, the Loyalist League urged that the farm lands held by them be purchased by the government and then resold. Members of the League complained that since the early 1920's sects had settled in colonies in southern Alberta and that this would in future give rise to questions of non-assimilated minorities. They demanded that the government should break up these colonies and sell the land to citizens who would more readily assimilate with other nationals.[47] The Canadian Legion, along with Mayor Elton of Lethbridge and various citizen groups urged that all pro-Nazi Germans should be interned.[48] These demands became particularly pressing in the face of alleged fifth columnist activities in southern Alberta and other parts of the country.[49]

---

46. "Too much German heard", Vancouver Daily Review, June 19, 1940.

47. "Urge that lands of sects be bought by government and then re-sold", Lethbridge Herald, June 24, 1940.

48. "Canadian Legion urge internment of Alien Enemies in Southern Alberta", Ibid., May 18, 1940.

49. "Citizens of Fernie take steps to cope with fifth column activity", Ibid., May 23, 1940, p. 15; "Fifth column arouses ire of Members (Ottawa)", Ibid., May 30, 1940; "Internment of all pro-Nazi Germans urged at Clareshold Mass Rally", Ibid., June 8, 1940; Other articles of a similar nature can be found in the following issues of Lethbridge Herald:-June 12, 1940; June 18, 1940; June 24, 1940.

In Saskatchewan the Canadian Legion pressed for a nation-wide prohibition of the use of German at public services.[50] Similar objections to the use of German were expressed in the Lethbridge Herald. "Why", it was asked, "should the German language be used at all in Canada at this time? Why should instruction in the German language be given in colonies of people of German descent?"[51] At various citizens' meetings it was resolved that the government revoke the naturalization papers of those who continued the use of German in public places. A similar position was taken by the Lethbridge City Council when it passed a resolution which if endorsed by education authorities would restrict religious community schools to the use of only the English or French language.[52] The endorsement was not forthcoming. In Coaldale the local Women's Institute "resolved to cooperate with the local Board of Trade in the protest to be sent to the proper authorities against Bible school and Saturday school being taught in German."[53] Under constant public pressure the Mennonites did close the Saturday schools and the German libraries.[54]

So intense was opposition in some areas that violence resulted. At Vauxhall, Alberta both the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonite churches, each with a seating capacity of several hundred, were burned down in one night.[55] Many residents had become

---

50. "Ban upon Germans is Demanded", Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Sep. 1940.

51. "By Way of Warning", Lethbridge Herald, May 27, 1940.

52. Ibid., Nov. 2, 1940.

53. "Use of German Language gets Women's Institute opposition", Ibid., Nov. 2, 1940; also July 5, 1940.

54. Vertreterversammlung, 1941, p. 7.

55. "Two Mennonite church buildings are burned in New West District", Lethbridge Herald, June 18, 1940.

angered at the 75 Mennonite families who continued the use of German despite public protests. In the Mennonite settlement of Drake, Saskatchewan, members of the Canadian Corps Association raided the Drake Bible School and drove one of the teachers out of town.[56] As a result of these pressures Mennonites in many communities kept the number of religious services to a minimum and even conducted weddings in conjunction with the regular Sunday morning worship service.

Mennonite church leaders sought to clarify the role of Mennonites as citizens. David Toews contributed some articles to the public press in which he attempted to show that the pro-German element constituted a much smaller segment of the Mennonite community than opposition groups were inclined to believe. He also pointed out that the use of the German language and the desire to preserve traditionally Mennonite ways was not necessarily an indication of pro-German leanings. He reminded the public that Mennonites desired to preserve the German language and ways of life only in the same way and for the same reasons that French Catholics or German Lutherans or Ukrainian Catholics sought to retain their cultural heritage.[57]

B. B. Janz, another church leader and member of the Coaldale community, also sought to clarify the Mennonite position. In an art-

---

56. Letter from J. Gerbrandt to E. Williamson, president of the Canadian Corps Association, Mar. 31, 1941, and published in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix.

57. Letters from David Toews to Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Apr. 29, 1939 and June 13, 1939; A. F. Cross, "Heiling Hitler on Saskatchewan Relief", Ottawa Evening Citizen, Nov. 27, 1940; Dorise W. Nielson, "In Defence of Mennonites", Ibid., Nov. 29, 1940.

icle entitled "Am I a National Socialist--God forbid",[58] he expressed the views of a majority of Mennonites. Janz deplored the emphasis certain pro-German groups placed on German blood, Aryanism, German books, book clubs and stamp collections in their attempt to tie Mennonites to Germany. He warned his brethren against subversive propaganda and reminded them that they had an obligation to pay their debts, to remain non-resistant, and to render loyal service to the Canadian government. Respecting the use of the German language Janz reminded the public that it requires some years for immigrants to acquire a new language. He pointed out that the older generation could not be expected to master another language in a few years, and should be allowed the use of the mother tongue at least in religious exercises. This, he explained, would change in course of time as history in Ontario had proved. Use of the German language, Janz maintained, did not mean "adherence to German politics". He expressed the hope that Mennonites would be granted the same privileges that were extended to the fifty or so other language groups in Canada.

The pressure that opposition groups were bringing to bear upon Mennonites was reflected also in their response to the military exemption problem. In their anxiety to prove to the public that the charges of pro-Germanism were applicable to only a small minority, many Mennonites were not displeased to see some of their young men join the combatant forces while others advocated some form of service in the Medical or Dental Corps, as opposed to the more conservative elements who were hoping for complete freedom from any form of

---

58. The article appeared in four Mennonite weeklies and in the Lethbridge Herald, June 1, 1940, p. 14.

involvement. When the war began, the different Mennonite groups still lacked a unified policy respecting types of service they would be able to render in lieu of combatant service.

Attempts had been made as early as 1935 to clarify with the government the military exemption status of the 1920 immigrants. In 1923 F. C. Blair, the secretary of Immigration and Colonization, had written to I. P. Friesen that "exemption from military service is no longer extended by the government to any particular class".[59] This statement had created uncertainty among the 1920 immigrants as to their exemption privileges. The Kanadier brethren had argued that this deprived the Russländer of protection by the exemption privilege. This misconception was, however, clarified in 1935 when Blair wrote Toews "that Mennonites are just as much exempt from military service as ever they were and that so long as their faith remains as now, they will continue to be exempt".[60] Mennonites were given to understand that exemption was based on the statutes of the Militia Act of 1868 and not on the Order-in-Council of July 28, 1873. The former had extended exemption to an individual "who, from the doctrines of his religion is averse to bearing arms," while the latter had been interpreted by the immigrants of the 1870's as granting exemption to Mennonites as a class. The real purpose of the 1873 Order-in-Council was to assure the prospective immigrants

---

59. Letter from F. C. Blair, secretary of Immigration and Colonization, to I. P. Friesen, Feb. 15, 1923, quoted by David Toews in a letter to F. C. Blair, Apr. 26, 1923. Letter from D. Toews in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

60. Letter from F. C. Blair to David Toews, Apr. 18, 1935 now in files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

of the 1870's that they were protected by the 1868 statute.[61] Subsequent amendments to the Militia Act stipulated that exemptions were to be individually claimed and that the burden of the proof of exemption qualifications rested with the claimant.[62]

It was clear, therefore, that in the event of another war individual Mennonites would have to claim exemption and it was this which prompted a visit to Ottawa by David Toews on October 29, 1936. At this time F. C. Blair gave assurance that "No resident of Canada need become restless about this matter or think it is necessary to take action at the present time. In the event of Canada being drawn into war there would be plenty of time then for persons who are exempt under law to claim that exemption".[63]

On May 15, 1939 the Mennonite groups in Canada met at Winkler, Manitoba to discuss non-resistant teaching and plan for a possible course of action in case of war. David Toews, chairman of the convention, emphasized the need for a united policy. B. B. Janz, who reported on behalf of the Mennonite Brethren, indicated that this group held to the principle of non-resistance but was not averse to medical corps service should some form of alternative service be required by the government. The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, the Old Mennonites and the Old Colony group voiced their opposition

---

61. Militia Act of 1868, 31 Victoria, Chapter 40, Section 17, quoted in Appendix VI of L. J. Burkholder, Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, 1935, p. 352.

62. Militia Act of 1927, R.S.C., Chapter 132, Section 11, available in the Legislative Library, Edmonton, Alberta. David Toews, Die Mennoniten und das Militargesetz, report for publication, May 2, 1935 now in files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

63. Letter from F. C. Blair to David Toews, Nov. 2, 1936, in files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

to any form of non-combatant service in spite of the call by Benjamin Ewert for a united front.[64]

The convention selected a committee of three to draft a message to be presented to His Majesty King George VI on the occasion of his visit to Canada in 1939. The members of this committee, representing the three largest Mennonite bodies in Canada, assured His Majesty and the Canadian government of the unwavering loyalty of all Mennonites. The meeting also requested the publishers of Der Bote and the Mennonitische Rundschau to avoid the publication of any articles which opposed the Mennonite fundamentals of faith. Respecting the influence of the press, David Toews had observed in 1938 that "If in our circles and also with the Canadian government doubts arise regarding our inner attitude to our principles of faith, and this should affect our people negatively, much of it could be traced back to controversy in the papers".[65]

When on June 21, 1940 the National Resources Mobilization Act was passed preparing the way for conscription, Mennonite groups saw the need for immediate action. On July 22, 1940 they sent delegates to the conference of Historic Peace Churches held in Ontario. On September 3 of the same year another conference of non-Mennonite pacifist groups decided to send a delegation to Ottawa to consult with the De-

---

64. Report of a discussion in the matter of military service of representatives of Mennonites in Canada, May 15, 1939 at Winkler, Manitoba, available in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

65. David Toews, The Controversy in the Papers regarding non-resistance, article for publication, Sep. 13, 1938 now in files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

partment of National War Services on the possibility of some form of non-military service. Later, on October 22, 1940, at a dominion-wide conference held at Saskatoon the Mennonite group decided to work with the Historic Peace Churches in formulating an alternative service program that would be acceptable to the government.

At a conference of Mennonites held at Winkler in 1939, the Kanadier of western Canada had concluded that they could not cooperate with the Russländer who had expressed intolerably liberal views regarding forms of non-combatant service. The Kanadier failed to understand the position expressed by the Russländer who had participated extensively in the medical and forestry services in Russia during World War I.[66]

After much consultation and clarification of issues involved, a compromise was reached. On November 12, 1940 a Mennonite delegation consisting of F. J. Swalm, David Toews, B. B. Janz and C. F. Klassen met with the deputy minister of the Department of National War Services. The delegation drew attention to the National War Services regulations which provided for non-military service supervised by civilian authorities and presented a service program similar to the medical and forestry services with which they had become familiar in Russia. Because response from the deputy minister was not very favorable, another delegation on November 22 contacted the Honorable J. G. Gardener, Minister of National War Services, who was quite sympathetic toward the plan. With the support of Walter

---

66. "Protokoll der Beratung der Vertreter der Mennonitengemeinden verschiedener Benennung in Manitoba am 14, Oktober, 1940 in der Kirche der M.B. Gemeinde, 621 College Avenue, Winnipeg," in J. A. Toews, Erfahrungen der Mennoniten in Canada 1939-45, Steinbach, 1947, pp. 79-88.

Tucker who was then Member of Parliament for Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Mennonites on May 29, 1941 obtained parliamentary approval of an alternative service program.[67] The plan was a compromise between the Russländer and Kanadier groups.[68] The former found that participation in the medical corps could lead to military involvement and consequently decided that an alternative service would be preferable. The latter realized that public pressure would not tolerate total exemption, especially in view of the popular reaction against everything German, and were reminded also that exemptions were to be individually claimed with the proof of exemption qualifications resting with the claimant.

In June, 1941 the Canadian Government informed the Committee of Military Problems of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches that all conscientious objectors of any religious denomination professing pacifist principles would be given the privileges of alternative service. In so doing the government was following the stipulations laid down by the Militia Act of 1927 which in part reads as follows:

> The following persons only shall be exempt from liability to serve in the militia. Persons, who from the doctrines of their religion, are averse to bearing arms or rendering personal military service under such conditions as are prescribed.

All eligible conscientious objectors were required to serve in work camps in National Parks or at Forest Experimental stations. These camps were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Mines and Resources. The term of service was initially four months but was

---

67. J. A. Toews, op. cit., pp. 37 - 38.

68. Ibid.

later extended for the duration of the war. The government assumed all maintenance costs, travelling expenses to and from camp and paid a nominal amount of fifty cents per individual per day. Churches maintained religious advisers in these camps.

While these projects were in operation a labor shortage was developing on the prairies to the extent that in 1942 a large portion of the Alberta harvest remained in the field. This prompted the Order-in-Council effective May 1, 1943 which provided for the employment of conscientious objectors on farms and in factories by placing the Alternative Service System under the control of the Department of Labor.[68a] Under this arrangement those assigned to farms would receive $25.00 plus room and board with the balance of the wage being paid by the employer to the Red Cross Society. Those assigned to factories were paid $38.00 per month in view of the fact that maintenance could not be supplied by factory employers. Workers on farms were under the control of the Alternative Service Officer regarding working conditions, assignments, transfers, dismissals and wages. After the introduction of this type of service many of the forestry camps closed so that by June 1944 only seven were still in operation.

When by 1943 army recruitment fell short of the needs, the government passed an Order-in-Council making it possible for conscientious objectors to join the Medical or Dental Corps under special conditions.[68b] This revived Russländer interest in the form of service which they had previously laid before government officials. In November, 1940 B. B.

68a. J. A. Toews, Alternative Service in Canada during World War II (Winnipeg, 1959), p. 38; Yearbook of the Northern District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1944, p. 66.

68b. Ibid., p. 64; J. A. Toews, Alternative Service, p. 38.

Janz with three other delegates had presented government officials with a plan under which young men would be required to perform acts of mercy and healing without being compelled to join the combatant forces. At the time the delegation had been informed that the basic training for the Medical Corps required arms training with no guarantee that the men would not be transferred to an active combatant unit. This had resulted in the rejection of the plan by the Mennonites. The Order-in-Council of September, 1943 assured Mennonites that there would be no need to bear arms during the period of basic training nor would there be danger of transfer of such men to combatant units without their consent. This new arrangement, however, came late in the war, the service involved was not in separate units and religious supervision and instruction was not permitted. As a result only about 150 Mennonites joined the Medical or Dental Corps and these were Russländer[69] from the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite groups.

The total number of Mennonites in Canada taking advantage of the alternate service was 7543. On the basis of church statistics, interviews and comparisons it has been estimated that another 7500 entered combatant service. Of the 1920 immigrants approximately fifty per cent of eligible sons served in the active forces.[70] It is quite evident that as many Mennonite young men joined the armed forces as served under the alternative service plan. This is borne out also by a study of some predominantly Mennonite communities in Alberta. In the Dids-

---

69. J. A. Toews, Alternative Service, p. 61.

70. Ibid., this information was based on church tabulations.

bury district, for instance, where the Mennonite element was enlarged by additions of Russländer during the 1920's and 30's fifty-nine Mennonites joined the combatant services whereas sixty-three served under the Alternative Service program as conscientious objectors.[71] In the Hague district, another strong Mennonite centre, 79 out of 163 eligible Mennonites joined the armed services.[72] A study of a typical Mennonite family reveals that out of a total of thirty young men who received the call to service, one was medically unfit, sixteen joined the active forces and thirteen chose the alternative services working on farms and in forestry camps.[73] Of the Mennonites who joined the active forces many served with distinction, one being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross while another, Peter Engbrecht, was described by the Toronto Star News as "a member of a religious sect which forbids participation in wars, of pure Germanic descent, and a member of the R.C.A.F. The 21-year-old bomber gunner can claim an unparalleled record in the air force. He has personally destroyed five enemy aircraft and a probable sixth, and has won the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal".[74]

Paradoxical as it may seem, many Mennonites, in an effort to preserve their faith recommended relaxation on some of their ways and principles of faith. Just as there were many who urged limitations on the use of German so there were those who viewed favorably the fact

---

71. Correspondence with Mr. G. Stevens of the Canadian Legion, Didsbury.

72. Compiled from the Honor Roll of Hague, Legion records, and church records.

73. Information obtained through correspondence with various members of this family, interviews and church records.

74. Toronto Star News, Nov. 4, 1944.

that a comparatively large number of their young men joined the combatant forces. Such action, it was felt, would help to convince the public of Mennonite loyalty to Canada and produce a more sympathetic attitude toward the Mennonite community. In post-war years this posed a problem for Mennonites respecting the handling of those who had joined the combatant forces, and the maintenance of a strong non-resistant position in the face of the more liberal attitudes of the Russländer and the influence of the Mennonite war veterans.

The desire to impress favorably the Canadian public was reflected also in monetary contributions and relief work. Mennonites subscribed approximately $750,000 in non-interest bearing certificates and some $3,000,000 in interest bearing war bonds.[75] In addition to this they contributed substantially for relief through channels administered by the church. The Canadian Mennonite relief effort was encouraged by the work begun by various American Mennonite groups in July, 1920 when the Mennonite Central Committee was created with the purpose of promoting relief activities.[76] In December, 1939 the Ontario Mennonite groups initiated relief work through the Non-resistant Relief Organization. This was followed in January by similar efforts in western Canada under the direction of David Toews, C. F. Klassen, and B. B. Janz. By February Mennonites had organized provincial relief committees in all four of the western provinces.[77]

Each of these committees appointed representatives to a central body known as the Mennonite Central Relief Committee for Western Canada. This committee, which officially began on March 15, 1940,

---

75. M. Gingerich, Service for Peace, Scottdale, Pa., 1949, p. 414

76. P. C. Hiebert, Feeding the Hungry, Scottdale, Pa., 1929, pp. 49-50.

77. Mennonite Central Relief Committee, a pamphlet containing the minutes of these meetings, available in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

immediately began to collect funds to assist in the Mennonite Central Committee effort.

The first relief workers from western Canada to serve overseas were Peter J. Dyck and Elfrieda Klassen. The former was a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan and in 1940 to 1941 was serving a pastoral charge of the United Church of Canada at Sudbury, Ontario. The latter was a graduate nurse from Winnipeg. In 1941 these two began their relief activities at Birmingham and Manchester, where they administered several homes for children and old people from war devastated areas. Mennonite churches supported this work with gifts of clothing and canned foods and with cash contributions. By 1942 the Mennonite Central Relief Committee monetary contributions for work in England were averaging $1,250 per month. While figures of the contributions from Alberta Mennonite churches are not available, those from western Canada are provided in Table V.[78]

TABLE V

Relief Contributions from Mennonite Churches in Western Canada

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1942	19,336.03	1945	45,059.53
1943	26,631.10	1946	72,696.86
1944	26,911.97	1947	61,464.32
		Total:	252,099.81

These relief efforts attracted widespread attention and gave Mennonites some of the favorable publicity which they desired

---

78. Table compiled from the records of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

to offset the unfavorable impressions created by the use of German, by the pro-German sentiments expressed by some and by the conscientious objector issue.[79] A visit of the Star Phoenix to the North Park School in Saskatoon revealed that volunteer workers from a number of Mennonite settlements had packed and crated 43,000 quarts of canned meat and vegetables for shipment to England. From ten to twenty men from country churches had worked for a whole month on the one project. There were also ready for shipment some 1200 pounds of beans, 600 pounds of canned beans, and 1000 pounds of home-made soap. A considerable amount of flour and a great deal of clothing had already been sent overseas. In addition $4000 in cash donations had been received. The Star Phoenix, which gave the effort a six-column picture display, also reported:

> The Canadian government gave the Mennonites of Canada permission to can 100,000 quarts of meat and 125,000 quarts of vegetables. Saskatchewan had nearly half the amount ready and Alberta and Manitoba will more than complete their quotas.

The effort put forth in this relief activity becomes even more significant considering that it was carried out while Mennonites were still wrestling with the Reiseschuld. In the face of the demands and criticisms brought on by the war years Mennonite leaders saw in a rapid repayment of their debt another opportunity to convince the public of Mennonite integrity and ability to contribute to their country rather than to constitute a burden to society. Additional incentives for a renewed effort toward debt liquidation

---

79. "Mennonites' Gifts of Food to Hungry Europe", Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Dec. 1, 1945; "Mennonites Give Food to Europe", Belleville, Ontario, Daily Intelligence, Dec. 24, 1945; George B. Murphy, "Western Mennonites Plan Practical Help for Europe", Family Herald and Weekly Star, u.d.

were the heart searching brought about by the war, the improved crops and prices, and the prospect of assisting additional thousands of Russian Mennonite refugees uprooted by the world war.

With repeated admonitions at conferences and in churches, supported by the accelerated activity of local and provincial committees, the collection of the debt was greatly facilitated.[80] During the 1940's regional committees undertook a systematic processing of all the debts and the debtors by districts and provinces. Where it was deemed advisable a list of debtors was published as a further inducement to pay. This was done at Coaldale in December, 1940, revealing that out of 267 names 63 parties still owed part or all of the Reiseschuld with individual accounts ranging from 84 cents to $2,099.90.[81] In November of 1942 the Reiseschuld committees of Alberta, issuing a report on the provincial level, showed that there were still 898 families with outstanding accounts.[82] A further encouragement to the work of debt collections were the concessions made by the C.P.R. which had before 1939 reduced the interest by one-half and then in November of that year agreed to remit 10 years of interest on the debt to any districts prepared to liquidate the entire debt in their area. This was later modified with the C.P.R. holding the Board responsible only

---

80. C. F. Klassen, Vortrag von C. F. Klassen auf der Provinzialversammlung in Saskatoon am 16 und 17 Juli, 1942; this report is in the files of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

81. "Die Mennonitische Anseidlung bei Coaldale, Alberta, 1940", Vertreterversammlung, 1940, pp. 28-34.

82. "Stand der Distrikte sum 1 Dezember, 1942", Ibid., 1942, pp. 19,20.

for the principal and interest up to 1930.[83]

District Reiseschuld committees, taking advantage of the new provisions and circumstances, conducted energetic campaigns for debt liquidation. Many who had already paid their debts helped to pay other accounts simply to get the district debt eliminated. Such generosity brought embarrassment to some of the delinquent debtors, as did the publication of the names of debtors, and induced them to exert every effort to get their debts paid.

In this way, district by district, the burden of the Reiseschuld was reduced. In Alberta the Mennonite settlements at Gem, Rosemary and Duchess were the first to pay the debt. This they accomplished in 1943.[84] The next year Lindbrook, Tofield, Wembley and La Glace were successful in their efforts.[85] On February 9, 1945 at the Vertreterversammlung held at Rosemary, the chairman of the Provincial Committee, Mr. A. A. Toews, expressed great satisfaction in being able to announce the liquidation of the Alberta's share of the Reiseschuld.[86] The following year on November 19, 1946 Mennonite churches received the welcome news that the debt of $1,947,398.68 had been paid in full.[87]

---

83. C. F. Klassen, "Zur Reiseschuldfrage", Protokoll der 14. Jahresversammlung der Organisation der Mennoniten in Saskatchewan, abgehalten in Swift Current am 8. und 9. Juli, 1943; J. Gerbrandt, "Die Tätigkeit der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization seit Anfang des zweiten Weltkrieges", Mennonitisches Jahrbuch, 1956, pp. 3,4.

84. Vertreterversammlung, 1944, p. 14.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., 1945, p. 22.

87. J. J. Thiessen, B. B. Janz, J. Gerbrandt, "Die restlose Tilgung der Reiseschuld der seit 1923 nach Canada eingewanderten Mennoniten von Russland", a statement for the Mennonite press dated Nov. 19, 1946.

A number of factors enabled Mennonites to meet the Reiseschuld obligation and at the same time contribute large amounts for relief assistance. Most significant, perhaps, was the principle of mutual aid which was conceived by Mennonites as part of a divine plan. Thus they were not urged to practice mutual aid primarily because it was an ideal economic plan conceived and perfected by man, but because it was considered the only fitting form of behavior for members in a Christian brotherhood.[88]

So strong was this conviction that by 1945 Mennonites in America had organized 53 mutual aid associations.[89] During their pioneer days in Alberta Mennonites had manifested this spirit in their cooperative barn-raisings, in the cooperative planting and harvesting of crops for sick or disabled farmers, and in the contribution of money and food to help those in distress.[90] Before the second world war Alberta Mennonites had established the Doktor Verein[91] (Doctor Society), the Mennonite Hospital Society,[92] the Beerdigungskasse[93] (Burial Fund), All three of these have been described in previous chapters.[94]

During the war Mennonites organized the Alberta Mennonite

---

88. J. Winfield Fretz, Meditations on Christian Mutual Aid, published by the Association of Mennonite Aid Societies, u.d., p. 38.

89. A Directory of Mennonite Insurance and Mutual Aid Organizations, Mennonite Research Foundation, Goshen, Indiana, 1956.

90. M. Weber, Such was Life, Calgary, 1956.

91. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Nov. 1, 1927.

92. Ibid., Sep. 24, 1934.

93. Ibid., Jan. 9, 1929.

94. Chapter four, pp. 149ff. above.

Fire Insurance Society.[95] For this purpose the province was divided into four districts, Coaldale, Rosemary, Didsbury, and Peace River, each with a representative on the executive of the Society.[96] In December of 1951 there were 789 Mennonite families registered as members with insured property worth $3,676,891.00. Money in the treasury at that time amounted to $36,954.70.[97] The society extended insurance not only for fire but also for storm damage to crops and buildings. It has functioned very successfully and has provided a very necessary service to the Mennonites at rates below the regular insurance costs, the premium having been kept down to about $ .30 per $100.[98] The benefits derived from this type of mutual aid made it easier for many Mennonites to pay the Reiseschuld and help their destitute European brethren.

To meet the demands placed upon them by the principle of mutual assistance Mennonites had learned to live on meagre means. They, especially the Russländer, had acquired such frugality also through years of distress and persecution. Many immigrants, therefore, exercised great care in the use of their earnings in order that the small savings might be used to pay for the transportation debt or to help some needy brethren. Numerous widows assisted with the harvest, setting up grain stooks to raise money for their debts. One couple in their sixties, despite their low income during the de-

---

95. Protokoll des Brandaeltesten, Aug. 10, 1943.

96. Vertreterversammlung, 1943, pp. 22,23.

97. Ibid., 1951, p. 11.

98. Ibid., 1952, p. 14.

pression, paid the amount of $824.00 plus interest in less than five years.[99] A woman of 68 years paid her debt in about two years by working at odd jobs.[100] Another instance of careful stewardship was Cornelius Plett, a minister, who rented a 12-acre farm near Calgary for $15.00 a month and in one year managed to pay $78.00 on his Reiseschuld,[101] despite the depression and limited resources. It was the frugality illustrated by these and many similar cases, that made it possible for many Mennonites to advance economically in spite of their heavy debt and relief obligations.[102]

It is quite obvious, of course, that the general improvement in economic conditions following the advent of the war did much to facilitate the debt liquidation and relief activities. During this period of prosperity, Mennonites, who had learned to live frugally and had established a reputation for being good farmers,[103] appear to have been somewhat more successful than non-Mennonite farmers. As borne out by Table VI[104] a survey of 338 Mennonite farms in Alberta

---

99. Nachrichtenblatt, Apr. 1, 1936, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

100. David Toews, Etwas Zum Nachdenken, a report for publication, June 3, 1936, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

101. Isaac Zacharies, "Zur Reiseschuld", Der Bote, Mar. 22, 1933, p. 2.

102. See copies of Nachrichtenblatter, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

103. "Mennonites in Canada", Montreal Daily Herald, Oct. 12, 1937.

104. The statistics are only of limited value. As the table may suggest, most farmers were reluctant to divulge information concerning income except to indicate the income range into which they might fall. Church records, revealing the extent of member contributions, were likewise of limited value because not every farmer contributed a specified percentage of his income to the church. Government statistics revealed only the number of farm units and land acreage occupied by Mennonites.

revealed an average cash income from farm produce sold in 1941 of approximately $2200.00. In order to assure that there would be a minimum amount of error due to possible overstatement the average income was arrived at by using only the lowest figure of each income range. During the same year the 99,732 Alberta farmers

TABLE VI

Income from farm produce sold by Mennonite farmers during 1941

Income from farm produce sold	No. of farms (1941)	Percentage
$ 10,000 and over	8	2.4
6000 to 9999	39	11.5
3000 to 5999	104	31.1
1200 to 2999	106	31.2
500 to 1199	61	18.0
250 to 499	20	5.8
	338	100.0

earned a total cash income of $154,408,000 from the sale of farm products.[105] This constituted an average cash income per farm of approximately $1500, which was about $700 below the average farm income of Mennonite farmers in Alberta. The ability of Alberta Mennonites to excel those in other parts of Canada in their debt liquidation and relief contributions can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that many Russländer settled in irrigation districts and were not hindered by the drought of the 1930's as were those in many parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

---

105. Correspondence with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, Ontario, dated May 21, 1963.

CHAPTER SIX

Mennonitism during the Post-War Period, 1947-1960

At the end of hostilities the Canadian economic expansion which had begun during the war continued unabated through the 1950's. It was promoted largely by European economic recovery. The fields of western Canada yielded abundantly. Farmers benefited from government control of the grain market because this left them less exposed to the full impact of world price fluctuations. With his basic income secured, the farmer acquired the tractor, the combine, the hay baler, new cultivators and chemical weed controls. In a few years the old methods disappeared and one man could operate his farm as effectively as half a dozen men could before or during World War II. Provincial highways and municipal roads were well graded and maintained, many of them being kept open all winter. The car and truck replaced the cutter and bob-sleigh. The increased mobility which the better roads and new vehicles conferred completed the breakdown of the one time isolation of the farms. Rapid industrialization and urbanization quickly absorbed all the laborers and skilled hands the rural and urban population could provide. The demands of industry placed a premium on education. Churches, contrary to expectations, experienced a vigorous movement of expansion.

All this presented the Mennonite groups with a kind of challenge they had never before encountered. How would Mennonite churches be able to counteract the lessening of community spirit within their brotherhood, and the increasing zeal for money and profit? Would

the men who had been away from home for prolonged periods serving in factories, alternative service camps, on farms or in the combatant forces find their place in agriculture? Would they perhaps be drawn to urban centers by the demands of industry and the opportunities afforded by higher education? Mennonite leaders, soon after the war, expressed concern over the rapid urbanization, the emphasis on education and centralization of schools and the rate at which English was replacing German even in religious exercises. The increasing measure of contact between Mennonite and non-Mennonite churches, made possible by improved means of communication, was a matter for concern. How would all this affect Mennonite family life? What could the church do to preserve the Mennonite faith in the face of these circumstances?

The most immediate problem of the postwar period was the successful rehabilitation of thousands of European Mennonite refugees. As early as 1944 Mennonite leaders were anticipating a recurrence of the type of assistance rendered to the Russländer after the first world war. On August 6, 1945 the Mennonite Central Committee officials resolved to assume the responsibility for the rescue and resettlement of the Mennonite refugees. To initiate this endeavor the Mennonite Central Committee commissioned C. F. Klassen to go to Europe to act on behalf of the Committee.[1]

The prospect of obtaining federal government consent to a request for the admission of more Mennonites into Canada was much

---

1. John D. Unruh, In the Name of Christ, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 1952, pp. 178, 179.

better in 1945 than it had been after World War I. There was no economic recession after the second world war, such as there had been after 1918. Instead of the hasty demobilization which followed the first war and temporarily flooded the labor market, large armies were retained both because of the aggressiveness of communist Russia and the necessity of maintaining occupation forces. This and the tremendous demands placed upon industries for the reconstruction of a war-devastated Europe kept the economy in a high state of prosperity. Instead of a surplus of labor such as existed after World War I there was after 1945 a strong labor market, and a climate of opinion favorable to immigration.

Although immigration authorities favored a resumption of immigration after World War II, a serious obstacle was the lack of transportation facilities. Nearly two years after the war Prime Minister King, seeking to clarify the immigration issue, told the House of Commons that immigration was not being limited by legislation or regulation but by the shortage of transport.[2]

It was for this reason that the primary emphasis was placed on the admission of close relatives. On May 28, 1946 the class of admissables was broadened by Order-in-Council to include the father or mother, the unmarried son or daughter, 18 year or over, and the orphan nephew or niece under 16 years of age of any person legally admitted to and resident in Canada who was in a position to receive and care for such relatives.[3]

---

2. Debates, House of Commons, Canada, Official report, May 1, 1947, pp. 2644-2647.

3. Order-in-Council, P. C. 2071, May 28, 1946

On July 5, 1946 J. Gerbrandt and J. J. Thiessen, respectively secretary and chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, appealed to Prime Minister King for a further extension of the categories of admissables. This was followed by another Order-in-Council dated January 30, 1947 which broadened the categories to include the widowed daughter or sister of any Canadian capable of receiving and caring for such persons, a farmer seeking agricultural employment and coming to his father, father-in-law, son, son-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, uncle or nephew who was likewise a farmer and in position to assist the immigrant relative to get established, farm workers with guaranteed jobs waiting for them, and experienced mine and forestry workers with guaranteed jobs in the respective industries.[4]

The last two of these classifications came under the Special Projects scheme sponsored by the Department of Labor in cooperation with industries suffering a labor shortage. Immigrants coming to Canada under this scheme were obligated to remain at their contracted place of employment for at least one year.[5] Any industry seeking immigrant help under this scheme was to make its needs known to the Department of Labor and might commission selection teams to the displaced persons' camps in Europe. Only a year after the Order-in-Council of January, 1947 Canadian industries had applied for a total of over 20,000 displaced persons.[6]

---

4. Order-in-Council, P. C. 371, Jan. 30, 1947.

5. J. J. Thiessen, Report on Canadian Immigration and Resettlement for the Annual meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee, Dec. 10, 1948, Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.

6. Gordon M. Grant, "Here are Industry's Steps to Add D.P.'s to Labor Force", The Financial Post, Feb. 14, 1948, p. 17.

Encouraged by the new provisions, a number of Canadian societies interested in promoting immigration approached the Prime Minister with a petition for further modifications. The delegation that sought a hearing with King was composed of Walter Tucker, M.P. for Rosthern, Saskatchewan, J. J. Thiessen for the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, the Ukrainian Canadian Veterans' Association, Canadian Citizens of Polish Origin, Committee for the Relief of Democratic Refugees, Lutheran World Relief, the Catholic Bishops of the Prairie provinces, and the Catholic Immigration Aid Society.[7] The delegation requested the admittance of all immediate relatives, the provision for appropriate immigrant inspection facilities at convenient places in Europe and an even more generous interpretation of existing immigration regulations. To justify this request Tucker stated on behalf of the delegation: "Our constituent members are sending thousands of dollars monthly for the support of their relatives in Europe which might be well spent in establishing these relatives in Canada. This money is not a severe drain on the individual families supporting their relatives, but the sum total, which is considerable, might be better used for the establishment of these people here as Canadian citizens, and for the development of Canada's natural resources through the efforts of these relatives."[8]

That Prime Minister King was not averse to these requests was evident from his policy speech in 1947 in which he voiced sup-

---

7. Walter Tucker, et al., To the Right Honorable William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister, Feb. 7, 1947, archives of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

8. Ibid.

port for increased immigration as a means of enhancing Canadian nationhood. He stated: "The population of Canada at present is about 12,000,000. By 1951, in the absence of immigration, it is estimated that our population would be less than 13,000,000 and that by 1971, without immigration the population would be approximately 14,600,000. Apart from all else, in a world of shrinking distances and international insecuirty we cannot ignore the danger that lies in a small population attempting to hold so great a heritage as ours."[9]

On the basis of the response to the various petitions the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization made preparations to bring in and establish Mennonite refugees. The Board received applications from Mennonite families, mostly Russländer, on behalf of their refugee relatives abroad. By August, 1946 those who had applied to sponsor relatives as immigrants had already deposited with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization a total of $100,000.[10] Every applicant undertook to provide employment, to pay transportation costs, and to guarantee that the newcomers would not become a public charge.[11] Should an applicant not be able to raise all the necessary funds, the provincial committees were authorized to advance limited amounts out of their provincial immigration funds. The Board forwarded applications to the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources. If the application was accepted here, the Canadian immigration officials abroad

---

9. Debates, House of Commons, Canada, Official report, May 1, 1947, pp. 2644-2647.

10. J. J. Thiessen, "Zur Herüberbringung unserer Flüchtlinge aus Europe", Der Bote, Aug. 28, 1946, pp. 2,3.

11. J. J. Thiessen, Report of Canadian Immigration and Resettlement for the annual meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee, Dec. 10, 1948, Akron, Pa.

were informed accordingly and the prospective immigrant would appear for medical and political screening.[12]

Before the movement of refugees could begin on a large scale another obstacle, in addition to the lack of transportation facilities, had to be overcome. This was the fact that many of the prospective immigrants were not eligible under the regulations of the International Refugee Organization. Among those excluded were the Volksdeutsche (ethnic Germans) on whose behalf some 20,000 applications had been received by May, 1947. It became evident, therefore, that another organization would have to be set up to take care of these refugees.

To find a solution to this problem T. O. F. Herzer, general manager of the Canada Colonization Association, and H. C. P. Cresswell, chief commissioner of the Department of Immigration and Colonization of the C.P.R., called a meeting for June 23, 1947 "for the purpose of organizing a joint mission to handle refugees or displaced persons who do not come within the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees of the International Relief Organization."[13] Present at this meeting were 23 leaders representing religious, governmental and transportation organizations, including representatives from the federal Immigration Branch and the Department of External Affairs. The Mennonite delegation consisted of J. J. Thiessen, chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, William T. Snyder,

---

12. J. J. Thiessen, Bericht über die Arbeit der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, July 8, 1947, on file at the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

13. T. O. F. Herzer, Canadian Christian Council for Resettlement of Refugees: A Brief History, March 3, 1951, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives.

director of the Mennonite Aid Section of the Mennonite Central Committee, and J. H. Sherk, manager of the Canadian office of the Mennonite Central Committee with headquarters at Kitchener, Ontario. Mennonite immigration officials expressed keen interest in the outcome of the discussions.[14]

The deliberations led to the organization of the Canadian Christian Council for Resettlement of Refugees, which was to function outside the mandate of the International Relief Organization. Participating in this organization were the Catholic Immigrant Aid Society, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and German Baptist Immigration and Colonization Society. T. O. F. Herzer, a Lutheran, became the temporary chairman of the organization. All participating bodies agreed to contribute to a central fund, which Herzer suggested should be built up to $200,000. This was later modified when the federal government granted financial support for the Canadian Christian Council for Resettlement of Refugees to facilitate its operations. The headquarters of the new organization were established at the Canadian Lutheran World Relief Office in Winnipeg.

With the aid of these organizations and the increasing availability of transportation facilities, movements of Mennonite refugees became more substantial in 1948. To facilitate the migration, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization sent J. J. Thiessen to Europe to assist C. F. Klassen in the

---

14. Letter from W. T. Snyder to C. F. Klassen, June 26, 1947; Letter from C. F. Klassen to T. O. F. Herzer, June 19, 1947; available in the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives, Saskatoon.

immigration process. By December, 1948 a total of 4227 Mennonite refugees had come to Canada in 38 sailings and 11 air flights.[15] Table VII summarizes the categories and their distribution.

TABLE VII

Categories and Distribution of Immigrants by December 10, 1948

Category	Number	Destination	Number
Close Relatives	3832	New Brunswick	2
Sugar Beet Workers	253	Prince Edward Island	2
Farm Laborers	66	Quebec	6
Woodworkers	41	Ontario	580
Domestics	29	Manitoba	1376
Mine Workers	6	Saskatchewan	684
Total:	4227	Alberta	484
		British Columbia	1093
		Total:	4227

In bringing these refugees to Canada, Mennonite agencies sought to avoid another Reiseschuld problem and any friction that indebtedness might cause between the International Relief Organization and the applicants.[16] Fortunately Mennonites had prospered during the economic upsurge brought on by the war and were in a good position to assume responsibilities that a new influx of their brethren would entail. To pay for the transportation costs close relatives had deposited with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization the sum of $822,000. The Board had insisted on this

---

15. Minutes of the meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Aug., 1949; J. J. Thiessen, Report on Canadian Immigration and Resettlement for the annual meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee, Dec. 10, 1948, Akron, Pa.

16. See the "IRO-Ottawa" file in Mennonite Central Committee archives, Akron, Pennsylvania.

as a prerequisite to bringing a relative to Canada except in cases where the applicants were not able to raise the necessary funds. In such instances the provincial committee advanced limited amounts from provincial funds supplemented in some cases by loans from the Board.

By the beginning of 1949 the Close Relatives Scheme opportunities were practically exhausted. There still remained in Europe several thousands who apparently had no relatives in Canada or for whom no applications had been made by residents of Canada. To bring these refugees to Canada became the major concern of the Board in 1949.

In October, 1948 the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization presented A. L. Jolliffe, director of the Canadian Immigration Branch, with a proposal respecting these Mennonites. The Board stated:[17]

> We propose that the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization obtain a list of the 2000 (approx.) persons remaining in occupied Germany, after which sponsors will be located in the various provinces of Canada in which Mennonites live. The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization will locate housing and employment for these prospective immigrants, and will submit same to your department.
>
> The Mennonite Central Committee, a sister organization of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, will negotiate with the International Refugee Organization for ocean transportation. We believe the International Refugee Organization may provide free transportation for these people, but in the event we cannot receive free ocean transportation, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Canadian Board are prepared to assume it. The International Refugee Organization has already provided free transportation to Paraguay for three transports of Mennonite displaced persons.
>
> We respectfully seek the cooperation of the Department of

---

17. Letter from J. J. Thiessen and Wm. T. Snyder to A. L. Jolliffe, Oct. 22, 1948; Report of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Feb. 2, 1949 on file at the C.M.B.C. archives, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Immigration in bringing the above mentioned refugees to Canada.[18] This proposal was approved on January 19, 1949 with certain limitations. Only 1000 of these refugees and their dependents were to be admitted, provided they were selected on a farm employment basis. Any Canadian farmer applying for such immigrant help had to give assurance of at least twelve months employment at a minimum wage of $45.00 per month for men and $35.00 for women. He also had to provide acceptable accommodation. The Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization thereupon urged Mennonite farmers to forward applications and to make some sacrifices on behalf of these refugees. By November 1, 1949 this scheme together with the Close Relatives scheme had resulted in the arrival of another 1616 Mennonite refugees in Canada. Of these 91 came to Alberta, with Saskatchewan and Manitoba receiving the largest number.[19] From 1947 to 1961 inclusive, a total of 12,052 Mennonites entered Canada with the assistance of the Board. Of these 1348 or approximately one-ninth of the refugee immigrants came to Alberta.[20a] This was to be expected in view of the fact that about one-ninth of Canada's Mennonites resided in this province.[20b]

Not included in these figures were the Old Colony Mennonites who came to Canada during the 1950's. It will be remembered that in the 1920's a large number of these Mennonites had migrated to Mexico to escape the pressures in Canada.[21] Already in 1939 David Toews of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization had reported that 175

---

18. Report of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Jan. 28, 1949, in the C.M.B.C. archives, Saskatoon.

19. J. J. Thiessens report to the provincial Alberta meeting, 1949, at Coaldale.

20a. These figures were provided by Kaethe Hooge, secretary, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

20b. Mennonite population figures derived from Mennonite yearbooks.

21. Chapter Three, pp. 111, 112, above.

families were seeking the help of the Board. The C.P.R., however, was not ready to undertake a credit movement owing to the poverty of these people and the attitudes they had expressed before their exodus.[22] Beginning early in the 1950's a number of the Old Colony Mennonites began a migration from Mexico to the Fort Vermilion settlement of Alberta in order to escape the drought conditions prevalent in Mexico during these years. Owing to the disorderly nature of these unassisted migrations, the Board sent William M. Enns and A. A. Wiens to Mexico to warn prospective migrants against disorganized movements and failure to observe all legal requirements of Canadian immigration. When the 1950's drew to a close the drought in Mexico ended and the migrations stopped. Attempts have been made to estimate the total number who came to Canada but the disorganized nature of the migrations have made this difficult. Some reports have placed the figure as high as 1000 persons.[23]

In Alberta the Mennonites had, in 1946, created an Immigration Fund, from which money was to be drawn to help new immigrants. The fund was established by personal loans, gifts, collections and any other means which could be carried out with reasonable success. From the fund the Provincial Relief Committee could make loans at the rate of 3% interest.[24] The committee solicited the support of

---

22. Report by David Toews, June 21, 1939 on file in the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization archives, Saskatoon.

23. J. J. Thiessen, The Flight of the Mennonites in Mexico, a report dated May 22, 1954; A. A. Wiens, Report of the trip to Mexico as requested the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, dated July 10, 1954; Letter from A. A. Wiens to J. J. Thiessen, April 30, 1954. Reports and letter on file at the C.M.B.C. archives, Saskatoon.

24. Protokoll des Mennoniten Provinzieles Hilfskomitee, Feb. 6, 1947.

all Mennonite groups in the province. By April, 1952 a total of 97 loans had been made amounting to $46,086.42.[25] Most of the loans were rapidly repaid and the fund was considered a success in every respect.

Another responsibility assumed by the Mennonite Provincial Relief Committee was the finding of jobs and land for the immigrants. One of its major concerns was to keep the immigrants near Mennonite settlements. Contact was maintained with immigrants who had to work some distance from other Mennonites. Frequent visits by ministers and relatives, as well as letters, church bulletins and other literature constituted efforts to keep the newcomers in touch with the Mennonites in the province. Churches in all areas were urged to contact all Mennonite immigrants and draw them into the Mennonite spiritual orbit.[26]

The committee often expressed regret at the rapid urbanization of the new immigrants.[27] In this regard J. J. Thiessen observed:

> Our immigrants are finding it hard to settle down because for a number of years they have been on the go, first from Russia to Poland, then to Germany and other European countries, and now to Canada. Having lived in congested areas, they seem to feel lonesome on our scattered farms.

Warnings were sent out repeatedly urging the "new Canadians" to live up to the terms of their contracts by remaining on the farms for at

---

25. Protokoll des Mennoniten Provinzieles Hilfskomitee, Apr. 23, 1952.

26. Ibid., Aug. 10, 1948.

27. Mennonite Life, July 1948, p. 34.

least twelve months.[28] Owing to the high price and scarcity of good land no large settlement scheme could be undertaken. In addition, the high salaries, the many conveniences obtainable in towns and cities and the general post-war trend toward greater industrialization induced many to seek employment outside agriculture.

The arrival of these newcomers posed new problems of assimilation for both the Kanadier and Russländer groups. To them the immigrants appeared intensely European and in many instances socialistic in ideology. Twenty-five years under Communism had given many of the immigrants startling economic and social ideas. Concerning the religious aspect, J. J. Thiessen wrote: "The spiritual life of the immigrants has suffered under the influence of the anti-religious propaganda of Russia and Germany. A number of the immigrants are spiritually indifferent and some even opposed to religion."[29] Church leaders reported frequent instances of misunderstanding between the Canadian Mennonite farmer and the relative he had undertaken to employ. In many cases this acted as a further incentive for the immigrant to leave the farm and seek employment in urban centers away from immediate Mennonite influence. Even the few months that many of these immigrants spent in the homes of their Canadian brethren prompted observations like this one:[30]

> Absorbing the newcomers is proving a difficult task. The contrast between us and the newcomers is very trying. It shows to what extent we older immigrants have become Canadianized.

---

28. Protokoll des Mennoniten Provinzieles Hilfskomitee, Aug. 10, 1948.

29. Mennonite Life, July, 1948, p. 34

30. Vertreterversammlung, Aug., 1948. Translated by author.

The movement of refugee immigrants to urban centers was only part of a more general tendency among earlier Mennonite settlers and the rest of western society to gravitate toward cities and towns. Already in 1938 Marian Green Ellis noted that a "problem which worries the Mennonite fathers today is what is going to happen when the surplus is forced away from the community".[31] Mennonite leaders at different times drew the attention of their conferences to this very issue.

How extensive this movement had become by 1960 is revealed by a number of studies. The results of an occupational survey conducted in 1959 involving 400 jobholders are summarized in Table VIII.[32] It revealed that 85 of the 400 or 21.25% were farmers. The other 315 represented 48 different occupations. A summary of the jobs held by members of a typical Mennonite family appears in Table IX. Whereas the members of the family all began as farmers when they first came to the prairies and had remained in the same occupation until World War II, some of them and most of the offspring of the original settlers had by 1960 entered a variety of occupations. At that time there were only 40 farmers out of a total of 175 gainfully employed persons, constituting 23.5% of the total number of jobs held. Similar results were obtained from a survey, in 1960, of those of Mennonite background employed in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge.[33]

---

31. Family Herald and Weekly Star, June 22, 1938.

32. The method employed was to contact ten Mennonites with whom the author was acquainted. These were all farmers. From these a list of occupations of relatives and friends was obtained. These were contacted for an extension of the survey.

33. See Tables X, XI and XII on following pages.

TABLE VIII

The Occupational Analysis of 400 Jobholders in the Province of Alberta - 1960

Type of occupation	Number	Type of occupation	Number
1. Farmers	85	27. Cafeteria and milk bar (prop.)	2
2. General Laborers	54	28. Lumber Co. (manager)	2
3. Factory Laborers	19	29. Telephone operator	2
4. Carpenters	19	30. Coal miner	3
5. Ministers and Christians workers	28	31. Meat wrapper	2
6. Teachers	30	32. R.C.A.F.	2
7. Missionaries	26	33. Lawyer (one now in Winnipeg)	3
8. Students-university, etc.	21	34. Supervisor-old folks' home	1
9. Nurses	16	35. Serviceman-lineman	1
10. Mechanics	9	36. Student advisor (U. of A.)	1
11. Business Proprietors	8	37. Railway section man	1
12. Store and Office clerks	10	38. Box factory (prop.)	1
13. Insurance & Finance agents	6	39. Chemist (now in Ont.)	1
14. Medical Doctors	4	40. Social rehabilitation	1
15. Building contractors	3	41. Postmaster	1
16. Bus drivers	3	42. University professor (U. of A.)	1
17. Service station (prop.)	3	43. High school superintendent	1
18. Plumber	3	44. Printer & publisher	1
19. Welders	3	45. R.C.M.P.	1
20. Feed Mill	3	46. R.C.A.F.	1
21. Milkmen	3	47. Welfare work	1
22. Pilot	2	48. Cheese factory (manager)	1
23. Cook	2	49. Creamery & Dairy (manager)	1
24. Real Estate (notary public)	2	Total	400
25. T.V. Electrician	2		
26. Trucker	2		

TABLE IX

The Occupational Analysis of 175 Jobholders in a Typical Mennonite Family - 1960

Type of occupation	Number	Type of occupation	Number
1. Farmer	40	15. Stenographers	4
2. Factory employees	19	16. R.C.A. as career	2
3. Construction laborers & carpenters	23	17. Medical Doctor	1
4. General laborers	13	18. R.C.M.P.	1
5. Building contractors	7	19. R.C.A.F. as career	3
6. Business-management & ownership	8	20. Dairy recorder	1
7. Teachers	14	21. Hotel porter	1
8. Ministers	6	22. Trucker	1
9. Insurance, Sales, & Finance agents	4	23. Printing & publishing	2
10. Nurses	6	24. Pharmacist	1
11. Store clerks	3	25. Welfare work	1
12. Bank clerks	2	26. Missionaries	3
13. Milkmen	2	27. Coal mine worker	1
14. Garage mechanic	2	28. Operating engineer	2
		29. Meat Wrapper	2
		Total:	175

TABLE X

The Occupational Analysis of Jobholders in Edmonton - 1960

Type of occupation	Number	Type of occupation	Number
1. Office workers	143	22. Restaurant & Hotel employees	29
2. Proprietors	17	23. Builders & Construction workers	91
3. Factory workers	153	24. Railway employees	17
4. Mechanic	19	25. R.C.M.P.	4
5. Machinist	19	26. Armed services	24
6. Linemen	4	27. Civil Service	52
7. Vulcanizer	4	28. Social work	1
8. Electrician	4	29. Radio station employees	4
9. Radiologist	1	30. Teachers	18
10. Dentist	1	31. Foremen	14
11. Nurses	22	32. Pastors	5
12. Medical Doctors	3	33. Students	15
13. Hospital employees	30	34. Professors	2
14. Service Station	13	35. General laborers	50
15. Store clerks & salesmen	113	36. Pilot	2
16. Business superintendents & managers	45	37. Farmers	2
17. Drivers	23	38. Research Technician	1
18. Truckers	24	39. Undesignated	97
19. Presidents-business	5	40. Retired	25
20. Tailor	1	Total:	1098
21. Beauty Parlor employees	1		

TABLE XI

The Occupational Analysis of Jobholders in Calgary - 1960

Type of Occupation	Number	Type of Occupation	Number
1. Office Workers	114	23. Photographers	3
2. Proprietors	26	24. Printers	3
3. Factory Workers	120	25. Organ Tuner	1
4. Mechanics	50	26. Restaurant & Hotel employees	57
5. Machinists	4	27. Builders & construction employees	218
6. Electricians	20	28. Railway employees	54
7. Welders	8	29. Civil Service	102
8. Radio & T.V.Technicians	3	30. R.C.M.P.	1
9. Dentist & Assistant	2	31. Armed Services	22
10. Nurses	34	32. Radio Station employees	3
11. Lab. Technicians	2	33. Teachers	32
12. Pharmacist	1	34. Pastors	9
13. X-ray Technician	1	35. Students	12
14. Hospital Employees	19	36. Foremen	15
15. Service Station	25	37. Engineers	5
16. Store clerks & salesmen	122	38. Farmers	7
17. Business managers	44	39. General Laborers	50
18. Presidents-business	4	40. Pilots	2
19. Drivers	63	41. Geologists	5
20. Truckers	29	42. Undesignated	110
21. Barbers & Beauty Parlor employees	8	43. Retired	36
22. Brewer & distillery employees	4	Total:	1450

TABLE XII

The Occupational Analysis of Jobholders in Lethbridge - 1960

Type of Occupation	Number	Type of Occupation	Number
1. Office workers	32	18. Drivers	9
2. Proprietors	12	19. Truckers	6
3. Factory workers	28	20. Hotel employees	8
4. Mechanics	14	21. Builders & construction employees	48
5. Tinsmith	1	22. Army	2
6. Blacksmith	1	23. Railway employees	8
7. Electrician	1	24. Civil Service	16
8. Radio & T.V. Technicians	4	25. Radio Station employees	2
9. Lab. Technicians	3	26. Engineers	3
10. Dental Assistant	1	27. Teachers	5
11. Nurses	17	28. Farmers	11
12. Hospital employees	11	29. Foremen	6
13. Service Station	11	30. General laborers	30
14. Store clerks & salesmen	37	31. Undesignated	35
15. Business Managers	10	32. Retired	12
16. Beauty Parlor employees	3	Total:	388
17. Watch repairman	1		

It appears from this that the degree of urbanization among Mennonites exceeds that of the Alberta provincial population of which 43.4% were rural in 1956 and 36.6% in 1961.[34] This becomes even more significant in view of the traditionally strong agrarianism of the Mennonites.

Various reasons were advanced by Mennonites for this extensive measure of urbanization. Those most frequently mentioned were the mechanization of farms, the shortage of available land especially in view of the larger acreage one man could handle as a result of new machines and methods, and the high cost of improved farms. The opportunities in industry, the influence of the educational system encouraging preparation for the different professions and the competitive and individualistic nature of our society were also listed as important factors. Church leaders often accused their brethren of striving for the conveniences, ease and comforts available in metropolitan centers. Mennonite churchmen also deplored the proselytizing activities of many of the non-Mennonite religious bodies and the impact of the undenominational schools such as Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills, Alberta. Of significance also is the progressivism of the Russländer, many of whom had owned large industries in Russia.[35] An additional incentive for urbanization was the desire of the more progressive Mennonites to overcome the impressions created by the extremely conservative Old Colony group.

---

34. Statistics received from the Provincial Bureau of Statistics, Edmonton, Alberta

35. See Chapter III of Thesis.

This movement into urban centers caused Mennonite leaders great concern. Investigation revealed that of the 400 jobholders contacted[36] 304 or about 75% were no longer affiliated with Mennonite churches. Of these many had joined other religious societies and some had lost all church connections. Of the twenty-eight pastors indicated on Table VIII, three were serving Mennonite churches, whereas the other 25 were pastors in such churches as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Pentecostal, Baptist, Church of the New Jerusalem, United Church, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical United Brethren and the Canadian Sunday School Mission. Similar results became evident from the family study[37] and the Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge surveys.[38] The former revealed that whereas all the members of the family were previously Mennonite Brethren, at the time of investigation 194 or 54% of the total had either joined non-Mennonite bodies or else severed all church connections. As shown by Table XIII a survey involving 8078 persons of Mennonite background residing in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge indicated that only 613

TABLE XIII
Number of persons of Mennonite background in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge - 1960

	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Total
Number associated with Mennonite churches	217	314	82	613
Number not associated with Mennonite churches	2879	3695	891	7465
Total:	3096	4009	973	8078

---

36. Table VIII on page 211.

37. Table IX on page 212.

38. Tables X, XI and XII on pages 212 and 213.

were affiliated with Mennonite churches. The total number of Mennonites attending either the Mennonite Brethren or General Conference Mennonite churches in Alberta during the same year was 5375.[39]

Although Mennonite leaders recognized that little could be done to curb the movement into urban centers, they sought various means to fortify their brethern against what they believed to be adverse influences of an urban society. One conference speaker reminded the brotherhood that

> because of the present trend from farming to industry many of our young people are culturally uprooted and our spirituality is threatened. Our biblical philosophy of combining religious principles with economic principles is no longer applicable. Our brotherhood used to provide the economic means of livelihood for the next generation by buying large tracts of land and establishing new colonies. This is now impossible.
>
> Changes in our society have necessitated a separation of the religious and economic principles. Our young people are of necessity pressed into industry, commerce, or the various professions. .... It is our responsibility to instill into our young people a biblical "Weltanschaung". If we do not succeed the results will be disastrous. The pressure of the new culture based on materialism demands a readjustment.[40]

Many church leaders advocated the establishment of private schools as one way to preserve the Mennonite faith in the face of a new environment. At one of the Mennonite conferences R. C. Kauffman, professor of psychology at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, emphasized the use of private schools for the in-

---

39. Yearbooks of the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonite Church for 1960.

40. Berichts und Beschuesse der Kanadischen Konference der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde von Nord-Amerike; abgehalten in Coaldale, Alta, July 2-7, 1955, p. 156

doctrination of Mennonite youth.[41] He said:

> We scoff at indoctrination. Children, it is said, should be left open-minded about religious and moral issues. Now, if we were totally in the dark on these issues, this attitude would be justified, but we are not. The accumulated wisdom of the ages as recorded in history and the light we have through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ certainly supply us with some directives. We need not suppose that all the truth is in order to teach them something. Something is better than nothing--for evil is never slow to indoctrinate. While European democracies hesitated to indoctrinate, liberalism was swept out head and foot by fanatical, indoctrinating men with perverted dogmas.

Another authority made the following observation regarding the need for private and religious schools.[42]

> Where Mennonites have not established their own schools, substantial changes have been made in the traditional Mennonite faith, including the abandonment of some major original principles.

At a convention of the Mennonite Brethren churches in western Canada, one of the speakers pressed for the establishment of Mennonite private high schools on the following premise:[43]

> We are living within a crucial period of our history. It constitutes the struggle for existence of our Brotherhood, our people and the church. Our peculiar position of separation within the framework of a unique Christian culture is in danger. Within the struggle for two cultures, moral disintegration, and religious "isms" we are faced with the problem of keeping our spiritual values intact. Schools occupy an important position in this struggle.
>
> The historical basis of our problem is important. The Bible and biblical teaching was the basis of every aspect of

---

41. R. C. Kaufman, "Salvation by Science?", Mennonite Life, Oct., 1948, p. 35.

42. Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 153.

43. Address given by Rev. J. B. Toews at the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren church of North America quoted in the Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1955, p. 155.

> life. In Russia especially the Mennonites combined religion, education and farming, thus producing a peculiar culture of their own. In Canada, the state dominated the school and the religious influence is excluded. Economic necessity requires higher educational standards, and our young people with few exceptions, try to acquire such an education. This influences the spiritual level of the churches.
>
> The conference must awake to the fact that we are living in a period of spiritual crisis.----Not only a Christian Weltanschauung, but fundamental spiritual power is necessary.

Some Mennonite groups in Alberta had established Bible schools and had conducted Saturday schools already before the second world war.[44] They had also investigated the possibilities of establishing private high schools but had postponed any such plan with the advent of World War II.[45] At the annual Provincial Conference of the Mennonite Brethren church held at Namaka in November of 1944 the school question arose again.[46] By November of 1945 the Mennonite Brethren groups in Alberta had obtained government permission to establish a private school. On March 8, 1946 the Mennonite Educational Society of Alberta was organized and in the fall of that year a high school was opened at Coaldale.[47] The curriculum followed was that prescribed by the provincial Department of Education, supplemented by instruction in religious subjects such as Bible Story, Christian Ethics, and Mennonite Church Doctrine. As a required foreign language, German was taught. Similar schools were soon established by both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites in Sask-

---

44. See Chapter four of Thesis, pp. 157, 160.

45. Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale, Jan. 11, 1936, Feb. 13, 1936.

46. Protokoll der Provinziellen Jahressitzung der Mennoniten Bruedergemeinde von Alberta, 1944, p. 9.

47. Protokoll des Komitees der Mennonitischen Hochschule, Mar. 8, 1946.

atchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba. Only the General Conference Mennonites established a private school in Ontario.

Mennonite Brethren leaders, anxious to determine the effectiveness of their private high school program, conducted a survey in 1956.[48] This revealed that 654 students had entered Grade XII in Mennonite Brethren private high schools during the 1944-45 to 1949-50 school years. Of this number 619 or 94.6% of the Grade XII students successfully completed the course of studies as prescribed by the provincial government. During the same period 1032 Mennonite Brethren youth entered Grade XII in public schools and of these 750 or 72.67% successfully completed the high school program.[49] In Alberta for the same period approximately 67% of those entering Grade XII qualified for high school diplomas or senior matriculation.[50] On the basis of this information Mennonite Brethren leaders pointed out that those of their youth attending private schools were more successful academically than those of their number attending government schools. It was discovered also that 42 to 54 per cent of those graduating from private schools entered university whereas 23 to 35 per cent of Mennonite youth graduating from public high schools went on to higher education. Here again Mennonites were gratified to find that in this respect also the number of graduates of their private schools exceeded the average for the province. Government statistics revealed that approximately 27% of those grad-

---

48. Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1956, pp. 10-12.

49. See Table XIV on page 219a.

50. Guidance Bulletin, Department of Education, Edmonton, Alberta, Jan. 1952.

TABLE XIV

Comparison of High School Achievements

	Mennonite Private High Schools				Public High Schools			
	No. attending	No. graduating	No. of graduates entering University	Percentage of graduates entering University	No. of Mennonites attending	No. of Mennonites graduating	No. of Mennonite graduates entering University	Percentage of Mennonite graduates entering University
1944-45	43	14	6	42.8	1324	157	46	35.03
1945-46	201	63	29	46.03	1151	141	42	29.79
1946-47	383	119	52	43.7	973	118	34	28.80
1947-48	382	123	63	48.09	979	117	31	25.63
1948-49	427	145	74	51.04	936	108	27	25.00
1949-50	493	155	85	54.84	879	109	26	23.85
1950-51	551	161	84	52.17	841	98	28	28.57
1951-52	705	182	91	50.00	711	91	23	25.17
1952-53	766	223	109	48.87	682	82	27	33.00
1953-54	843	246	121	49.18	657	79	24	30.38
1954-55	886	277	136	49.09	616	74	21	27.03
1955-56	890	298	143	48.00	659	81	25	30.99
1956-57	806	332	164	49.39	691	88	28	31.82
1957-58	771	294	173	58.84	719	97	33	34.02
1958-59	723	285	168	58.94	714	103	37	35.92
1959-60	766	273	159	58.28	935	126	41	32.62

uating from public schools continued their studies at the university level.[51] Table XIV on page 219 reveals that these trends indicated by the 1956 survey have continued until 1960.[52]

This can be ascribed, at least in part, to the desire, especially among the 1920 immigrants to dispel the impressions left by the extremely conservative groups such as the Old Colony Mennonites. Many Mennonite leaders maintained that the success of the Mennonite faith could be achieved more effectively if Mennonites could get into the professions and into positions of leadership in the community. This view was emphasized in the private schools. The influence of material advantages cannot, of course, be discounted as an important incentive toward higher education.

What pleased Mennonite observers was that most of those who had attended Mennonite private high schools remained within the Mennonite fellowship despite their higher education. By 1956, the time of the survey, 194 of this number were teachers, 66 were graduate nurses, 38 had become medical doctors, 16 held positions as graduate engineers and 32 were doing post-graduate work. The remaining 273 were distributed as follows: 13 Bible school instructors, 8 in post-graduate work in theology, 77 farmers, 56 ministers, 23 missionaries, and 97 housewives. The most encouraging aspect of the whole survey for Mennonite leaders was that all of the 619 graduates had remained

---

51. Research for Guidance, Department of Education, Edmonton, Alberta, Oct. 1952.

52. Material for table obtained from private school records, church records, Guidance bulletins sent out by the Department of Education, Alberta, and Bible school records both Mennonite and non-Mennonite.

in the Mennonite brotherhood, some holding leading positions. This seemed to support the convictions that private high schools were essential to establish youth in the Mennonite faith in the rapidly changing society. There are also indications that Mennonite success in this area has begun to attract to the Mennonite brotherhood some of those who had previously severed connection with the group.

In view of the individualism expressed by their members and the pressures of society most Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite leaders were pleased with the response to their educational endeavors. From a modest beginning in 1945 the number attending Mennonite parochial schools gradually increased until by the mid 1950's the enrolment at these institutions included more than half all Mennonite high school students. Both Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite leaders in their efforts to increase the attendance at their schools sought to determine the reasons why so many parents failed to respond. Among those most frequently forwarded by ministers, parents and students was the importance placed upon material advantages to the neglect of spiritual values and the preservation of Mennonitism.[53] Many young people expressed an unwillingness to forego the advantages of participation in community activities sponsored by the public schools and feared the loss of friendship with non-Mennonite associates in the community. There were also many who, by moving to urban centers, had lost contact with the Mennonite churches and had not been effectively influenced to renew such con-

---

53. This information was obtained from the Vertreterversammlungen, Year books of the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite churches, personal interviews and correspondence with Mennonite ministers, parents and students.

nection.[54] A number of students were attracted by the undenominational private schools such as those associated with the Three Hills Bible Institute and Briercrest Bible Institute.[55]

In addition to the establishment of private schools, Mennonite leaders advocated the adaptation of the Bible school program to existing needs.[56] The brotherhood was warned that

> It is historically proved that with a cultural revolution spiritual principles are always lost. Our Bible schools must become aware of the crisis and change their program, adapting it to the needs of the present generation.

More emphasis was placed on the doctrines and influences of various sects and cults to equip Mennonite youth to combat these. Courses in philosophy, psychology and critical interpretation of the scriptures were introduced. Some Bible schools opened commercial departments designed to prepare young people vocationally while studying in a religious environment. To meet the demands for higher education both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites established theological colleges in Winnipeg authorized to provide undergraduate as well as postgraduate work in theology and some areas of the liberal arts.[57]

Despite these efforts church leaders were not satisfied with

---

54. See Table XIII on page 215 for examples of this trend.

55. Information obtained from material supplied by the librarian of the Three Hills Bible Institute, yearbooks from Three Hills and Briercrest Bible Institutes, Mennonite church records and yearbooks.

56. J. B. Toews, "Address at the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren church of North America", Mennonite Brethren yearbook, 1955, p. 155.

57. Yearbooks, 1949, p. 55; 1951, p. 51.

the response to their attempts to arouse interest in Bible school training. Between 1945 and 1960 attendance at these institutions remained approximately 650, with an average of approximately 400 in the Mennonite Brethren schools and approximately 250 in the General Conference Mennonite institutions.[58] Although most church leaders were pleased to observe that enrolment had not decreased in the face of the increasing emphasis on materialism and that the schools had provided ministers and laymen who did much to promote Mennonitism in urban centers, they all felt that the number of Bible school students should be greatly increased. Both parents and young people were accused of giving economic advancement first consideration. Mennonite churchmen contended that in view of the 50% or more of their youth attending the private schools at least that proportion of their young people should be attending Bible schools.[59] Table XV supports the claim that many young people not only considered Bible school training too costly but refused to consider a delay of three or four years in getting established in some vocation during which time they stood to lose many educational and occupational opportunities that would otherwise be open to them. This position earned for many Mennonites the accusation that they were absorbed in the materialism of the day.

Another factor hindering attendance at Mennonite Bible schools was the emergence of sects and cults which gave rise to sectarian edu-

---

58. See Yearbooks of the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite churches for the years 1949 to 1960.

59. Table XV appears on page 224. Material obtained from private and Bible school records and church records.

TABLE XV

Bible School Attendance of Mennonite Young People

	No. attending private high schools	No. attending public high schools	No. attending Mennonite Bible schools	No. attending non-Mennonite Bible schools
1944-45	43	1324	417	141
1945-46	201	1151	386	168
1946-47	383	973	411	154
1947-48	382	979	462	163
1948-49	427	936	529	151
1949-50	493	879	486	136
1950-51	551	841	462	129
1951-52	705	711	475	94
1952-53	766	682	419	82
1953-54	843	657	392	76
1954-55	886	616	372	61
1955-56	890	659	373	55
1956-57	806	691	368	57
1957-58	771	719	331	59
1958-59	723	714	323	46
1959-60	766	935	412	43

cational institutions which in turn attracted Mennonite youth. Bible schools such as Prairie Bible Institute trained youth in biblical knowledge, served as an antidote to modernism, and raised the social standing of many regardless of ethnic background.[60] Groups from the Bible schools conducted tours throughout the province holding evangelistic meetings and directing camps and summer Bible schools. In these ways a significant number of Mennonite young people were attracted to these non-Mennonite institutions. Prairie Bible Institute records reveal that 317 Mennonite youth attended this school during the period

---

60. W. E. Mann, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, Toronto, 1955, p. 82.

1950 to 1959.[61] Other Bible institutes such as Briercrest Bible Institute and Peace River Bible Institute drew a similar number.[62] A survey of a typical Mennonite family shows that eight members attended Mennonite Bible schools whereas twenty one attended other religious institutions. The results of this survey are summarized in Table XVI.

Table XVI

Religious schools attended by members of a typical Mennonite family - 1960

Religious school attended	Number
1. Prairie Bible Institute (undenominational)	10
2. Winnipeg Bible Institute (undenominational)	1
3. Briercrest Bible Institute (undenominational)	7
4. Canadian Bible College (Christian and Missionary Alliance)	3
5. Mennonite Bible Institutes	8
Total:	29

In like manner responses from 400 Mennonites in 1960 revealed that 150 obtained schooling beyond high school and of these 93 entered Bible schools and colleges of whom 82 attended non-Mennonite institutes.[63] This would appear to indicate that although Mennonite youth, because of their religious background, place great value upon religious training, many were influenced to get this training in non-Mennonite schools.

Not only were Mennonite leaders concerned about those of their membership who received training in other schools, but they deplored

---

61. Numbers obtained from a study of the records at Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alberta.

62. Records of these two schools reveal that 543 attended Briercrest Bible Institute and 87 attended Peace River Bible Institute during the period from 1950 to 1959.

63. Information obtained from correspondence and interviews with persons of Mennonite background. See Table XVII on page 226.

TABLE XVII

Secular and religious schools attended
by Mennonites - 1960
(Based on a survey of 400 Mennonites)

Secular Schools	Number	Religious Schools	Number
University of Alberta	19	Non-Mennonite schools	
University of Saskatchewan	9	Peace River Bible Inst.	35
Calgary Technical College	4	Baptist Leadership Training Institute	2
Calgary Nurses' Aide School	4	Prairie Bible Institute	27
Nurses' training in hospitals	16	Canadian Bible College	12
Business college	1	Winnipeg Bible Institute	1
University of British Columbia	4	Hillcrest Bible Institute	2
Total:	57	Briercrest Bible Institute	2
		Trinity College	1
		Total:	82
		Mennonite schools	
		Mennonite Bible College	3
		Menno Bible Institute	4
		Mountainview Bible College	1
		Coaldale Bible School	1
		Tabor Bible college	1
		Bethany Bible College	1
		Total:	11

the influence that these students exercised upon Mennonite congregations.[64] Already in 1955 one conference speaker stated:

> Presently our churches are confronted with the negative influence exercised by non-Mennonite Bible schools ... Presently, also, we are challenged by doctrines which we cannot accept because they are not scriptural. But they enter our churches through our members who have attended non-Mennonite schools. These members, upon their return, have a negative influence upon our churches.

Regarding the influence of such members another Mennonite leader reminded the churches that "our leadership is frequently the creation of

---

64. Mennonite Brethren yearbook, 1955, p. 148.

non-Mennonite educational institutions. As a consequence of this,"[65] he stated,

> there is evident
>
> 1. An increasing position of indefiniteness, and differences of interpretation among the ministry on some principles contained in our Confession of Faith.
>
> 2. An absence of unity in policies of local church administration and practice.
>
> 3. A hesitancy in accepting defined statements of ethical, social and spiritual standards for life and practice, and the distinction of being a separated people from the world.

Some of the graduates from other schools found their way into positions of leadership in Mennonite churches, such as youth directors, Sunday School teachers and even pastors. In these positions they taught new doctrines and encouraged young people to attend non-Mennonite churches. They also promoted cooperation between Mennonite youth groups and youth fellowships in other churches. They led Mennonite young people to participate in the Youth for Christ movement, which brought the youth of most protestant churches together every Saturday night, and in special rallies and camp meetings. They also brought non-Mennonite speakers into their churches to the extent that in some congregations the demand for visiting speakers occasioned serious disunity.[66] In two of these such disagreement resulted in the loss of over half their membership to non-Mennonite churches.[67]

As a further attempt to promote a strong fellowship Mennonite leaders made every effort after World War II to settle the language problem. This again involved mainly the Mennonite Brethren and General

---

65. General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1951, p. 127.

66. Personal letter to author concerning a Mennonite district in Alberta.

67. Personal acquaintance of author with districts involved. Also, letter from Margaret W., member of one church, to author, April, 1959.

Conference Mennonite groups, as the Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ had long accepted the use of English both at home and in the church. The Old Colony Mennonites of the Fort Vermilion area, because of their isolation were able to continue the use of low German. After World War II some Mennonite leaders still urged the preservation of the German language contending that there was a close association between language and religion. One speaker told a convention:[68]

> Language is a mysterious thing. Emotional attachments encrust themselves around words, around particular "sacred" words. With the loss of the German language the literature on which our tradition has nourished itself is forgotten. As the new generation reads only English it feeds itself on books written in that accepted new tongue. A great tradition disappears and dangerous changes take place. You do not have to look far to see that, if you anchor your theological roots in popular American Protestantism, you are going to run into the danger of coming up with not much more than a humanitarian church which may ultimately evolve into secularism.

After the war many congregations re-opened the Saturday schools and German libraries, and conference leaders urged the use of private high schools and Bible schools to emphasize the German language. Parents were instructed to leave instruction in the English language in the capable hands of the public schools and to encourage the speaking of German in the homes and promote the reading of German periodicals. Mennonite leaders argued that in view of the strong drift into the cities a more stable spiritual life expressible in two or more languages would make for a stronger witness among one's fellow men.

In most congregations church leaders supported the use of English as necessary to avoid public disapproval but held that such

---

68. Mennonite Life, Oct., 1948, p. 40.

a changeover should be gradual to prevent a rift between the young and the old. This was emphasized during the 1950's in view of the increasing number of difficulties reported.[69] In one church several families ceased attending and a number of others transferred to another church because of the language problem. Some churches, to prevent further losses of members, conducted both an English and a German service each Sunday morning.[70] Several congregations replaced their elderly pastors with younger English speaking ministers.[71] Responses from 438 families who left the Mennonite church after World War II revealed that in 206 cases the language issue was one of the reasons for leaving the Mennonite fellowship.[72]

By the middle of the 1950's the pressure from church members upon their ministers was such that the use of the German language as an integral part of a Mennonite "way of life" was rapidly disappearing. Even the Mennonite Bible schools and colleges where German could most easily be emphasized reported in 1956 that 77% of all instruction was in the English language.[73] Similarly, the 1958 report of the Menno Bible Institute at Didsbury indicated that practically all the instruction was in the English language, and where German was used an explanation in the English language of what was stated was often necessary.[74] A survey of the 129 homes that make up a typical Menno-

---

69. Vertreterversammlung, 1958, p. 17.

70. Such cases are personally known by author.

71. Ibid.

72. Information obtained through correspondence with these families.

73. Canadian Conference Year Book, 1956, p. 173

74. Jahrbuch der 29ten Konferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Alberta, 1958, p. 51.

nite family revealed the following:-[75]

TABLE XVIII

Language used in the homes of a typical Mennonite family

Category	Number of homes
German preferred and used	22
Both German and English used	29
Only English used	68
Total:	129

The same study involving 354 persons exclusive of the spouses that married into the family resulted in the following:-[76]

TABLE XIX

Language preference among members of a typical Mennonite family

Classification	Number of persons
German used, little knowledge of English	6
Both German and English used, German preferred	40
Both German and English used, English preferred	77
Only English used-a knowledge of German	109
Little or no knowledge of German	122
Total:	354

A similar trend was apparent in the churches. Sunday school statistics of the General Conference Mennonites of Alberta are summarized in the following table:-[77]

TABLE XX

Language used in General Conference Mennonite Sunday Schools

Year	Language	No. of classes	Year	Language	No. of classes
1955	English	22	1958	English	55
	German	29		German	18
1956	English	31	1959	English	63
	German	26		German	14
1957	English	47			
	German	22			

---

75. Correspondence and interviews with members of the family.

76. Ibid.

77. Table compiled by author from General Conference Mennonite Yearbooks and from correspondence with pastors.

A survey of all Mennonite denominations regarding the language used in teaching Sunday school in 1957 indicated the same strong trend toward the adoption of the English language.[78]

TABLE XXI

Language used in the Sunday Schools of different Mennonite groups

Mennonite denomination	No. of classes	Language
Mennonite Brethren	56	English
	21	German
General Conference Mennonites	47	English
	22	German
Old Mennonite	22	English
United Missionary Church (was the Mennonite Brethren in Christ)	22-25	English
Church of God in Christ, Mennonite	11	English
	8	German
Old Colony Mennonites	No Sunday school classes	Use Plattdeutsche and some German in religious services.

In 1959 the General Conference Mennonite churches at Didsbury, Coaldale, Tofield and Rosemary reported English worship services once per month. Many Mennonite Brethren churches held both a German and an English worship service each Sunday morning and most of them conducted the Sunday evening evangelistic service in the English language. Young peoples' services with few exceptions were conducted in English. As the older generation passes and the present generation assumes leadership, Mennonite churches will undoubtedly shift exclusively to the use of the English language.

An increasing number of Mennonites after World War II argued that an aggressive church extension program would be more beneficial

---

78. Table compiled by author from the different yearbooks and from correspondence with pastors.

than the retention of the German language, although they agreed that a good knowledge of German would be useful in preserving Mennonitism. A knowledge of German could prove invaluable in evangelism among German speaking groups but its use would harm proselytizing in other areas. This view was in essence a revival of the evangelistic spirit that had characterized the early Anabaptists and Mennonites before continual persecution had intimidated these "flaming evangels",[79] and had produced what became known as the "Stillen im Lande".[80] The new urge to proselytize was expressed by a conference speaker in these words:[81]

> You, as church members, be friendly with members of your community who are not believers in Christ. Make yourselves available, be sociable in your contacts with them. .... This may necessitate adjustment to the ways of those in your community in so far as it is possible without a compromise with evil. Many church regulations and traditions, originally considered absolutely necessary for a purity that is becoming of a Christian must be abandoned not because they are wrong but because they act as a barrier in the endeavor to reach others with the gospel. Don't conform but be adjustable, pliable, useable.

The Mennonite group most concerned with evangelism during the post war period was the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.[82] This emphasis on proselytizing resulted from the Methodist influence to which this group had been subjected during the early years of its development.[83] The effective implementation of a strong evangelistic program

---

79. The Mennonite Encyclopedia, editors, Dr. H. S. Bender and Dr. C. H. Smith, Vol. II, p. 27.

80. Translated "the still ones in the land". Chapter one, p. 40, footnote, 58, above.

81. Vertreterversammlung, 1958, p. 11. Translated by author.

82. Now the United Missionary Church.

83. Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 272; also chapter one, p. 38, above.

was hindered, according to some leaders of the church such as Alvin Traub, by limited monetary resources, the lack of workers and the Mennonite name.[84] By 1945 the Mountainview Bible College was already supplying the needed workers, and the prosperity of the preceding years had provided the much needed funds for church extension. But, according to Traub, effective evangelism was still being hampered by the name of the church. In 1947 after twenty-five years of effort in this drection, Traub, as superintendent of the Canadian Northwest District, saw his goal accomplished when at the General Conference held in Potsdam, Ohio, the name of the organization was changed to United Missionary Church. This, the delegates felt, would facilitate evangelistic activities and church extension.[85]

This conviction appears to have been substantiated by the advances made by the Alberta United Missionary churches between 1947 and 1960. During these years this body established churches and gospel missions in fifteen different centers in the province,[86] compared to the eight districts which the group had entered in the preceding sixty years. Two of these churches, namely those in Edmonton and Calgary were by 1960 among the fastest growing congregations in the United Missionary Church conference. With few exceptions the churches and missions opened after 1947 were attended by non-Mennonites.

---

84. Gospel Banner, Jul. 13, 1922; Aug. 3, 1922; Sep. 7, 1922; Nov. 16, 1922; Dec. 28, 1922.

85. Proceedings of the 15th General Conference, 1947, the Conference Journal of the United Missionary Church, p. 50.

86. See Table XXII on page 234.

TABLE XXII

United Missionary Churches and Missions
established from 1947 to 1960

Place	Year	Place	Year	Place	Year
Big Valley	1947	Cremone	1956	Eckville	1958
Edmonton	1950	Hoadley	1956	Condor	1958
Gimlet	1950	Leedale	1957	Athabasca	1958
Calgary	1953	Sundre	1957	Fleet	1958
Bergen	1954	Redwater	1957	Montgomery	1958

After 1945 the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites expressed concern over the loss of members resulting from the new period of change. Church leaders attributed the major portion of this loss to the industrial development, rapid urbanization and the proselytizing activities of other religious bodies. They advocated increased emphasis on church extension especially in urban centers to win back Mennonites who had moved to towns and cities.

The General Conference Mennonites conducted surveys of various districts and urban centers in the province to determine the location of former members of their fellowship. As a result of these surveys the General Conference Mennonites established a church in Calgary in 1945 and in Edmonton in 1953. By 1958 the Calgary congregation had a membership of 211 representing 71 families, whereas the Edmonton church reported an average attendance of 97 representing 22 families.[87] Investigation also revealed concentrations of Mennonites at Grande Prairie, Wembley, Lymburn, Hayes, Seven Persons and

---

87. Jahrbuch der 29ten Konferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Alberta, 1958, pp. 62-65.

Taber. Those in Grande Prairie reportedly had joined either the Baptist or the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches in that town. At Lymburn investigators found 21 families of Mennonite origin.[88] In 1958 the General Conference Mennonites conducted a summer Bible camp and opened a Mennonite mission which reported an average attendance of 35 for the year following its opening. A few non-Mennonites joined the fellowship at Lymburn. At Wembley, a strong Mennonite community during the 1920's, only five families of Mennonites remained by 1958, none of whom had any church connections. A survey disclosed twenty families of Mennonite origin in the Hayes district. In 1958 the General Conference Mennonites established a mission group in this district.[89] At Seven Persons, with eleven Mennonite families in the district, a church was established in 1960. Investigations were continuing in 1960 with the view to recapturing many of the Mennonites who had migrated to different centers or districts without reporting to Mennonite churches or endeavoring to maintain contacts.

Surveys of different centers and districts by the Mennonite Brethren groups resulted in the establishment of churches or missions in Calgary (1958), Edmonton (1957), Linden (1949), Munson (1956), Sunnyslope (1957), Acme (1958) and Cornwall (1959).[90] In 1960 the Mennonite Brethren conference was continuing its efforts to locate and win back into fellowship those who had departed for various reasons.

---

88. Jahrbuch der 29ten Konferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Alberta, 1958, pp. 60-61.

89. Ibid., p. 9.

90. Berichte und Beschluesse der Kanadischen Konferenz der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde von Nord-Amerika, for the years 1946 to 1960.

The Old Mennonites, although not so concerned about expanding into new areas, did endeavor to retain the fellowship of their members as they moved to different centers. This led church leaders to open mission points at Round Hill (1941), Edson (1944), Stirling (1944), Gulp (1947), Eaglesham (1947), Smith (1947), Bluesky (1948), Judah (1952), Calling Lake (1955), and Edmonton (1956).[91] Having been adjusted to Canadian society before coming west and having been among the first settlers north of Calgary, the Old Mennonites were able to accommodate subsequent changes with greater ease and remained more closely attached to the soil as is seen from the small number that migrated to large centers. According to the 1960 survey of those of Mennonite background employed in Edmonton and Calgary only 106 out of 2548 had been or still were members of the Old Mennonite church.[91a] During the same year there were in Alberta, exclusive of those in the two cities, 702 members in the Old Mennonite churches, compared to 2372 in the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite congregations.[91b] It appears, therefore, that by 1960 approximately 12% of the Old Mennonites had moved to large centers whereas over 50% of the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites had done so.

The degree of adjustment also enabled the Old Mennonites to win into their fellowship many of the non-Mennonites in the community. The churches at Carstairs, Tofield and Duchess had, by 1960, gained a membership composed of a large number of former non-Mennonites.[92] The Carstairs church reported that well over half its membership had at one time been non-Mennonites. Some non-Mennonite family names appearing on the

---

91. Mennonite Yearbook, 1959, p. 58.

91a. Chapter six, pp. 210-213, above.

91b. Mennonite Yearbook, 1960, p. 58; Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1961, pp. 72-75, 279-282; General Conference Mennonite Yearbook, 1960, pp. 201-211.

92. Information obtained from these churches' records.

membership role of these three churches are as follows: Endersby, Watts, Torkelson, Bitterman, Emerson, Godfrey, Porter, Spicer, Kovas, Helegland, Sparks, Hjelter, Grances, Soma, Davidson, Hart, Glasner, Foss, Swaren, Voegtlin, Shaw, Hanson, McLennan, Droppo, Anderson, Campbell and Lewis.[93]

The other Mennonite groups of Alberta, namely the Holdemanites and the Old Colony Mennonites, both sought to isolate themselves rather than to proselytize. In this the Old Colony were temporarily the more successful because of the rather compact settlement which they had been able to establish in the Fort Vermilion area some 350 miles north of Edmonton. For existence a sect must maintain spatial seclusion away from the influence of civilization. To do this effectively a group must control the education of its youth, maintain a distinct language, literature and custom, and establish a high degree of economic self-sufficiency.

For some time the Old Colony did control education by providing private German schools conducted in some of the larger homes or in the churches. The Alberta Department of Education encountered strong opposition in their attempts to promote education in the settlement. In order to weaken antagonism toward the introduction of government controlled schools, the department drew teachers from the more progressive Mennonite Brethren, General Conference Mennonites and the Old Mennonites in the province. The teaching program was made less objectionable by allowing for Bible reading, hymn singing and prayer, all in the German language, before the beginning of classes each day. These opening exercises were conducted by Old Colony ministers. Permission was also granted for half an hour of instruction in German and religion several times a week, thus providing an opportunity to combine the language and religion of these

---

93. Letter from Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, Alberta to author, June 18, 1959.

settlers.[94] Despite these precautionary measures many parents refused to send their children to school. In one instance, where a school district boundary happened to fall between the house and the barn of a settler, with the house included in the district, the farmer promptly moved his family and household belongings into the barn in order to avoid school attendance. Even the Mennonite teachers whom the government had brought in were excluded from the religious exercises of the Old Colony Mennonites because their progressiveness might endanger the exclusiveness of the colony.[95]

Gradually the patient and cautious approach of the government officials began to bring results. In November, 1958 one Mennonite Brethren minister who visited the area reported that only a few parents were still refusing to send their children to school. He also expressed the hope that with a little pressure from the Superintendent of Schools all children would soon be receiving an education.[96] The Department of Education had by this time established four schools in the area and extended the educational program to include grade X. This constituted a significant advance because all forms of education beyond the elementary grades were still being described by Old Colony preachers as an evidence of worldliness. Some of this progress, no doubt, can be attributed to the influence of the General Conference Mennonites who had migrated to the area from various parts of Saskatchewan and Alberta during the late 1940's and early 1950's. By the end of the 1950's the control of education had passed completely into the hands of authorities outside the Old Colony Mennonite circle. Already there was evidence of a transformation of the attitude of youth toward

---

94. Letter from T. Giles, Superintendent of Schools, Fort Vermilion, Alberta, Jan. 7, 1959.

95. Interview with resident of the district, Mr. H. Kornelson, July 5, 1959.

96. Report by David Neufeld, on a trip to the Fort Vermilion colony on Nov. 3-8, 1958.

education and of the tendency on the part of young people to resent the extreme conservatism of their parents.[97]

The advance in education had, by 1960, produced a change in attitude of many towards the use of the English language. According to Johann Funk, a General Conference minister serving in the colony in 1959, the children and young people were already using English quite freely in their associations out of school and in their homes.[98] As tradition, religious sentiment, language and nationalistic feelings are closely knit elements of human conduct, the passing of the close attachment to Plattdeutsch (low-German language) promises to usher in a new and more progressive era for the people of the colony. Education also opened new horizons for some of the young people and by the late 1950's an increasing number were finding their way to larger centers.[99]

Rather than adjust to the demands of the society around them, the Old Colony church leaders continued their condemnation of "new ways" and insisted that the traditional be maintained. As late as 1960 Sunday schools, prayer meetings and evangelistic services were spurned. In religious services prayer was offered in silence with the worshippers kneeling. The minister would read the sermons from a book and dictate the hymns. No musical instruments or song books were in use. Any variation on the part of the preacher from the long established customs would meet with instant disapproval from the congregation. Trained or salaried preachers were described as symptons

---

97. Interview with Sara Lehn, teacher in one of the schools in the colony, May 10, 1959.

98. Interview with Johann Funk, minister to the General Conference Mennonites in the Fort Vermilion area in 1959.

99. Interview with Sara Lehn, May 10, 1959.

of worldliness. Church leaders urged their members to avoid involvement in politics, to refuse public office, family allowances and government pensions or insurance schemes. Automobiles, often called "hell-wagons", were tabooed as a symptom of an intruding civilization. According to the testimony of one of the teachers,[100] the settlers long opposed the purchase of a much needed truck on the ground that it would constitute a form of penetration of the colony by another social order. There was a strong insistence that women be garbed in somber clothes, including the apron and shawl, and that men appear always in the plainest of clothes cut to the old-fashioned pattern provided by the Old Colony preacher.

The success of this conservative emphasis was seriously undermined not only by the introduction of government controlled schools, but also by the progressive influence brought in by the General Conference Mennonites who penetrated the colony during the 1940's and 50's. They brought with them the latest farming equipment, constructed better roads, used cars, and built modern homes equipped with gadgets which most of the Old Colony neighbors had never seen before. They built churches, organized Sunday Schools and introduced religious services particularly designed for youth. They wore clothes of modern styling and made for the maximum convenience. They participated in civic affairs, emphasized the importance of voting in elections, and took full advantage of government pensions, insurances and family allowances. Their children mingled with those of Old Colony parents and imparted to them a new sense of values. By the mid-1950's some

---

100. Interview with Miss Sara Lehn, teacher in one of the schools in the colony, May 10, 1959.

of the Old Colony churchmen began to deplore these innovations[101] but refused to recognize that to adjust to the "new ways" would better serve to preserve their faith than to stand solidly against any change.

With the young people becoming resentful of the conservatism of their parents and an increasing number of them attending the services of the General Conference Mennonites, it became evident by 1960 that unless a dynamic church program was evolved soon the Old Colony congregations would suffer the loss of all their youth. The working out of such a program is hardly possible because the leaders do not have the vision, nor the education, nor the authority to devise or implement such a change. It appears, therefore, that because of the failure of their church leaders to adjust to change as other Mennonite groups have done, the Old Colony Mennonites may in future lose their identity and become a part of the General Conference Mennonite body.

The Holdemanites of the Crooked Creek area enjoyed a large measure of isolation even after the war, but those at Linden were losing their youth to urban centers. In their concern the Holdemanites adopted some of the methods used by other Mennonite groups in promoting their fellowship and by recognizing this need for adjustment may have saved their group from disintegration.

As a further effort to promote their faith Mennonite groups in Alberta, with the exception of the Old Colony and the Holdemanites, sought to enrich their existing religious program. Song festivals

---

101. Interview with Sara Lehn, teacher in the colony, May 10, 1959; Report by Johann Funk, minister among General Conference Mennonites of the colony.

added interest to the youth fellowship. These song fests bore some resemblance to the Glee clubs of other societies except that the songs were of a religious nature. The idea of the song festivals came from non-Mennonite denominations and sects through various channels. Churches such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Pentecostal and Apostolic made use of lively, youthful singing to arouse their congregations. The Youth for Christ crusades, conducted usually on a Saturday night, drew together the youth from different sects in special song services and revivalist efforts and emphasized intersect, interdenominational cooperation in religious activities. In some towns and cities especially at festive seasons such as Christmas and Easter, the choirs from several churches cooperated in rendering musical programs. In one center the author observed choirs from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Apostolic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran, Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite churches participating in a musical program in a United Church auditorium. Mennonite youth groups took part actively in such programs, especially under the influence and direction of some Mennonite young people who had attended non-Mennonite Bible schools. Of some significance also were the servicemen who had become familiar with various denominations and sects, and who brought new ideas into Mennonite churches. Frequently Mennonites who had moved to urban centers attended non-Mennonite churches because of the absence of Mennonite congregations in the centers. Whenever such Mennonites visited the districts in which they had previously resided or when some of them rejoined the Mennonite fellowship as churches were established in the towns and cities, they introduced changes.

In these ways both the songfestivals and the youth society programs took on a new form. The Jugendverein (youth meeting) held every second Sunday afternoon or evening with parents in attendance disappeared. In its place came the Young People's Society program held on a weekday evening and attended only by youth. These programs took the form of outings, hikes, parties and ball and hockey games. Often the young people of several religious bodies participated, including those from Pentecostal, Apostolic, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Baptist and Mennonite churches. Youth directors and some Mennonite churchmen expressed the view that through such activities their young people would become a part of the community, would find an avenue for self-expression and would be less prone to forsake the Mennonite fellowship.

As a further effort to promote the brotherhood Mennonite leaders modified their concept of church discipline and separation. Mennonites had long accepted it as the duty of the church to maintain the religious order not only by proclaiming the standards of righteousness and holy living but also by the exercise of "spiritual pressure". This took the form of direct admonition by the pastor or deacons, or by the expression of the will of the congregation, or by the ban and excommunication.[102]

Even before World War II church leaders experienced increasing difficulty in applying these different forms of discipline. Non-Mennonite religious broadcasts, religious books and periodicals put

---

102. The Dordrecht Confession of Faith, quoted in John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, Scottdale, Pa., 1949, pp. 215-228; Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 200.

out by the different sects, young men trained in non-Mennonite religious institutions and returning to Mennonite churches, all served to introduce new views on church discipline. Proselytizing activities of the sects and cults, urbanization of Mennonites, and improved communication systems helped to render old disciplinary methods obsolete. Attempts to implement control over disobedient members often led to disputes within the Mennonite congregations over details of rules and methods of enforcement. Compromise was often the only way of avoiding a schism and a further weakening of the brotherhood.[103] All these factors caused Mennonite churches to adopt the position of other religious bodies, namely to function as a worshipping fellowship of saints making conformity to church doctrines a matter of the individual conscience and relying on preaching and religious instruction to produce the desired faith and conduct.

The inability to enforce conformity led many Mennonite congregations and church leaders to condone activities which formerly they condemned. Thus, in most localities, especially in cases of the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites, the churches refused to observe the traditional policy of excommunicating anyone who had served in the armed forces. The returned men not only remained members in good standing but in many instances obtained leading positions in the church.[104] Commenting on this matter one minister noted: "The matter was brought up at the annual conference of

---

103. Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 69.

104. The author can point to specific examples of this.

our society but it was brushed aside without comment or discussion."[105] Leading Mennonite churchmen, however, continued their efforts at maintaining a pacifist position, although some form of alternative service was generally agreed upon. Even the United Missionary Church which was keenly interested in proselytizing, re-affirmed its non-resistant position at a General Conference in 1955, but for the first time in its history gave approval to non-combatant service.[106]

The increased number of leisure hours and the new media of communication confronted Mennonite churchmen with new problems of "separation". Rather than demand adherence to the traditional forms of conduct and face embarrassment resulting from inability to enforce such restrictions upon their members, Mennonite leaders taught that participation in certain forms of community activity could aid rather than harm the brotherhood provided these were accepted as a challenge to demonstrate Christian character to the world.[107] Consequently, the Mennonite groups in Alberta exclusive of the Old Colony and some Holdemanites approved attendance at provincial or community exhibitions, participation in athletic bands, glee clubs, and membership in agricultural, political, commercial and social service associations.[108] Attachment to the church was strengthened through prayer services, special revival meetings, fellowship suppers, visitation among the mem-

---

105. Interview with Rev. D. P. Neufeld, Rosemary, Alberta, May, 1959.

106. E. R. Storms, History of the United Missionary Church, Elkhart, Indiana, 1958, p.231

107. Interviews with Hans Dyck, minister, General Conference Mennonite Church, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, W. Zecharias, Principal, Swift Current Bible Institute, in April, 1959; D. J. Pankratz, minister, Mennonite Brethren Church, Coaldale, Alta, May, 1959.

108. Information from personal experience of the author.

bership, a church recreational program including games, picnics and travel, and other similar events. By 1960 only the most progressive of the Mennonite groups, namely the General Conference Mennonites, condoned smoking, drinking of alcoholic beverages, dancing, card playing or attendance at theaters.

A matter of much concern to Mennonite leaders was the influence of society upon family life. According to one Mennonite spokesman:[109]

> The automobile has brought the hospital, the doctor, the market, the church and distant relatives within easy reach. The mobility afforded by the car tends to break down the Mennonite family unit. The members of the family are being drawn into community institutions by the ever increasing number and complexity of activities. Family recreation is being seriously interrupted by the many alluring and demanding community activities. In many instances the wife, even if a mother, is holding a job outside the home. The family activity program, be it for economic, recreational or social purposes so occupies the moments of the day that it leaves no time for family worship. While participation in these activities is commendable it can ruin Mennonite familism if not carefully controlled. Close adherence to the Bible is necessary if our family unit is to be preserved in the face of an increasingly urbanized, secularized and individualized culture pattern of our land.

The same speaker accused Mennonite parents not only of neglecting family worship but also of indifference toward the mid-week prayer meeting and irregularity in attendance at Sunday worship services. Parents were urged to get back to Bible reading and prayer in the home.

These words of warning and accusation were based upon a survey of 307 Mennonite homes.[110] Of these only 190 observed some

---

109. Mennonite Brethren Yearbook, 1955, p. 148.

110. Ibid. See Table XXIII on page 247.

form of family worship. The greater majority of these read some piece of literature in place of the Bible. In 43 homes the parents read portions from the New Testament whereas only seven parents reported reading portions from the whole Bible in their family devotions. The report on the survey indicated that the Old Colony Men-

TABLE XXIII

Family Worship and Bible Reading habits of Mennonite Church Members

Specification	Number
Total number of persons involved	1342
Number of homes represented	307
Number of homes having family worship	190
Number reading the New Testament	43
Number reading the whole Bible	7

nonites had no family worship and that family Bible reading and prayer were less prevalent among both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites than among the Old Mennonites. Such neglect of the Bible, the report warned, had already resulted in spiritual indifference, immature ideals and a religion clothed in vague convictions incapable of resisting the social and material attractions of the world.

In their concern to get their brethren re-established in the scriptures and thus fortified to face the "world", Mennonite leaders instituted cottage prayer meetings,[111] emphasized Bible camps and the radio ministry, promoted establisnment of church libraries and sought to increase the circulation of Mennonite periodicals. A survey in 1958 of the Mennonite homes in the Coaldale district, Alberta's strong-

---

111. These were week-day meetings conducted in different homes with a few families in attendance and usually followed by a social time.

est Mennonite center, is summarized in Table XXIV.[112] Pastors and

TABLE XXIV

Distribution of Secular and Religious Periodicals in Coaldale area - 1958

Religious periodicals	No. of Mennonite subscribers	Secular periodicals	No. of Mennonite subscribers
Zionsbote	12	The Country Guide	210
The Canadian Mennonite	42	Free Press	325
The Christian Leader	33	Family Herald	210
Der Bote	150	Western Producer	40
Mennonitische Rundschau	190	Nord-Wester	50
		Courier	12
		Time	9
		Life	12
		Newsweek	15

church leaders noted that the relatively large circulation of German periodicals indicated that the publications were making a valuable contribution to the spiritual needs of the older generation. Churchmen were pleased with the careful choice of secular periodicals but expressed regret over the fact that only 42 homes subscribed to an English Mennonite periodical. This was interpreted to indicate that the younger generation lacked a keen interest in Mennonite periodical literature.

In addition to the effect on family life already indicated post war society produced among Mennonites a noticeable increase in mixed marriages. This caused the Old Mennonites and the United Missionary Church little concern because in most instances this meant an increase in membership. In 1960 one Old Mennonite pastor reported that of 12 mixed marriages, 8 couples joined the Mennonite

---

112. Compiled by author from correspondence with residents of the Coaldale area.

fellowship.[113] It would appear that long residence in western Canada and the adjustment to American society made this possible.

TABLE XXV

Mixed Marriages among the Old Mennonites - 1959

Ethnic origin of spouse	No.	Affiliation before marriage	No.	Present affiliation	No.
Norwegian	8	Lutheran	7	Old Mennonite	8
English	2	United Church	2	Lutheran	1
Swedish	1	No affiliation	3	No affiliation	3
American	1				
Total:	12	Total:	12	Total:	12

Both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites, however, expressed concern over mixed marriages because in many instances it meant a loss to the church. Of 140 cases investigated, and summarized in Table XXVI,[114] only one returned to the Mennonite fellowship. Of the 139 who severed their Mennonite connections, 78 were reported by their former pastors as having been "spiritually indifferent" before marriage, 9 joined undenominational missions and subsequently married non-Mennonites from their own or another mission society, 19 after marriage expressed a preference for the religion of the non-Mennonite spouse, maintaining that the doctrines and standards of the churches they joined were not very different from those of the Mennonites, 24 indicated the language of the spouse as the major factor preventing them from joining a Mennonite congregation, and 10 stated that contacts with the spouse had been made in a non-Mennonite Bible Institute. These preferred the doctrines of the spouse to those of the

---

113. Table XXV compiled from a letter from Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, Alberta to author dated June 18, 1959.

114. Compiled by author from correspondence with persons concerned.

Mennonites.

TABLE XXVI

Mixed Marriages among the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites based on a survey of 140 cases - 1959

Ethnic origin of spouse	No.	Present religious affiliation	No.
English	45	Christian and Missionary Alliance	16
German	26	United Church	27
Norwegian	13	Baptist	21
Scotch	13	Roman Catholic	10
Irish	9	Anglican	7
Ukranian	7	Lutheran	6
Swedish	5	Evangelical Free Church	5
Dutch	8	Church of the New Jerusalem	5
Russian	3	Presbyterian	7
Swiss	2	Pentecostal	1
Polish	2	Seventh Day Adventist	1
Austrian	1	Greek Orthodox	3
French	1	Evangelical United Brethren	1
Chinese	1	Salvation Army	1
Hungarian	1	Mormon	1
undesignated	3	United Missionary Church	1
		Affiliated with interdenominational missions	9
		No affiliation	15
		undesignated	3
Total:	140	Total:	140

A similar trend is evident from a study of a typical Mennonite family. Exclusive of the couples who first settled in the prairies, there have since then been 130 marriages and of these 61 involved non-Mennonites.[115] Of the 61 cases of mixed marriage, all have left the Mennonite churches, having either joined other religious bodies or remained unaffiliated. Thus, approximately 53% of all the marriages were within the Mennonite society while 47% were outside marriages. Of the 61 who married non-Mennonites 28 were described by their former pastors as "not very keen on religion",

---

115. See Table XXVII on page 251.

13 indicated their acceptance of the religion of the spouse before marriage, 4 went overseas as missionaries and subsequently married, 9 stated that the language issue had proven a major obstacle, while 8 married non-Mennonites whom they met while training in undenominational institutions and subsequently settled where there was no Mennonite church. Many church leaders expressed the view that with a complete change-over to the use of the English language and with the necessary adjustments to the new society mixed marriages would result in an increase in membership. This had been the experience of the Old Mennonites in Alberta.

TABLE XXVII

Mixed Marriages among members of a typical Mennonite family - 1960

Ethnic origin of spouse	No.	Present religious affiliation	No.
English	28	Christian and Missionary Alliance	8
Dutch	12	Roman Catholic	6
German	7	United Church	6
Ukranian	7	Pentecostal	5
Scotch	3	Baptist	4
Irish	2	Interdenominational missions	4
Norwegian	2	Lutheran	1
		Evangelical Free Church	1
Total:	61	Anglican	1
		Plymouth Brethren	1
		No affiliation	24
		Total:	61

In addition to the various efforts to promote a strong fellowship the Mennonites of Alberta recognized the needs of war devastated countries as a challenge that could serve to draw Mennonite churches together. In 1946 Alberta Mennonite groups organized the Mennonitisches Provinzieles Hilfkomitee (Mennonite Provincial Re-

lief Committee) to direct a provincial relief program.[116] The committee was open to representatives of all Mennonite groups in Alberta.[117] In each congregation a Local Relief Committee directed activities within the district. Although foreign relief was its main concern, the Mennonite Provincial Relief Committee assumed numerous other duties such as support of the ill and poverty stricken Mennonites within the province and encouragement of Mennonite endeavors along cultural and spiritual lines.

Through the activities of this committee Alberta Mennonites made substantial contributions to alleviate starvation and suffering in Europe and South America. In 1947 the Alberta Mennonite relief efforts totalled $47,470. This was made possible by donations of 136 head of cattle, 10 sheep, 500 blankets and 30 pairs of shoes. The meat was processed in the Mennonite owned cannery at Coaldale and all labor connected with the project was voluntary.[118] In 1948 the committee embarked upon another project in which 72,428 lbs of meat worth $38,086.40 were canned and sent to Europe. In addition blankets, clothes and agricultural tools, such as hoes, were sent to Paraguay.[119] Through these and subsequent relief activities Alberta Mennonites had by the end of 1951 contributed a total of $186,466.10 toward foreign relief.[120]

---

116. Vertreterversammlung, 1946, p. 11.

117. Ibid.

118. Reports of the Mennonite Provincial Relief Committee, Coaldale, Alberta dated Dec. 6, 1946 and Mar. 11, 1947.

119. Vertreterversammlung, Dec. 1947, p. 7; Dec. 1948, p. 3.

120. Annual report of the Secretary-treasurer of the Mennonite Provincial Relief Committee, Coaldale, Alberta for 1951.

While a great degree of cooperation among Mennonite groups had been attained on the provincial level in Alberta through the Vertreterversammlungen and the Mennonite Relief Committee and on the national level through the activities of the Mennonite Central Committee, there were those who strove to bring together all Mennonite churches just as the World Council of Churches was seeking to unite protestant denominations. Already in 1925, Herman H. Neufeld, writing in the Mennonitische Rundschau, suggested that the Mennonites of North America could benefit from a Bundeskonferenz, a general conference of all Mennonite congregations in North America.[121] When in 1960 the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization merged with the Mennonite Central Relief Committee to form the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, church leaders felt that new strength and solidarity had been achieved but they pointed out that the vision of an organization in which all Mennonite groups in Canada would be represented, had not yet been realized. The new organization was composed of representatives of only the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites although the charter provided for the affiliation of other groups and the leaders of the new council expressed the hope that a unified organization might yet be achieved.[122]

Many leaders considered the merger a remarkable advance in view of the differences that had existed between the Russländer and

---

121. Herman H. Neufeld, "Die Mennonitischen-Bundeskonferenz in Nord-Amerika", Mennonitische Rundschau, Apr. 15, 1925, p. 7

122. By-laws of the Canadian Mennonite and Immigration Council, archives of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Saskatoon.

Kanadier, although an organizational division had been prevented in Saskatchewan and Alberta largely through the mediatorial efforts of David Toews. By the end of World War II the differentiation between the two elements had become virtually nonexistent, at least within church conferences, and the designations Russländer and Kanadier fell into disuse. Intermarriage and intercommunication had erased many of the misunderstandings, which had divided the two groups so sharply in the early years after the immigration. The fusion that had taken place is illustrated in a story told of himself by J. M. Pauls who, as a Russländer minister, had entered the service of a predominantly Kanadier congregation. A staunch Kanadier had observed that too many Russländer were being elected to conference and church offices. Indignantly Pauls had replied: "Why always elect the Russländer, why not elect J. M. Pauls?" All of these developments were good omens of a possible future merger of the various organizations.

The trend toward Mennonite unity ran parallel to the growing concern and activity on many fronts. The economic prosperity of the Mennonites made possible an impressive program of religious and cultural activity. The large and prosperous farms, the imposing businesses and factories and the large number of high-salaried professional men seemed to support the opinion that the Russländer had acquired as much in material possessions in Canada as they had lost in Russia.[123] Large and beautiful brick churches were rapidly replacing the simple

---

123. A pictorial representation of this prosperity is to be found in:-Walter Quiring, Mennonites in Canada: The Pictorial Record, Altona, 1961.

frame structures of pioneer days as more and more of the Mennonites exchanged rural for the urban environment. By 1960 the building and expansion of Bible schools, high schools and colleges were still on the increase. Former Russländer participated wholeheartedly in the inter-Mennonite establishment of Conrad Grebel College on the University of Waterloo campus. Hundreds of students were attending Canadian universities and remaining loyal to the cause of Mennonitism. As another inter-Mennonite endeavor a company of Mennonite shareholders, including both Kanadier and Russländer, in 1957 founded the good music radio station CFAM at Altona.[124] Shortly thereafter a company of Mennonite shareholders undertook the construction of CFMW, one of Canada's most powerful FM stations, in a suburb of Winnipeg. Home and foreign mission boards recruited scores of workers from the ranks of both Kanadier and Russländer families and turned their energies increasingly to serve the needs in the non-Mennonite world. Despite the rather alarming losses in membership suffered by Mennonite congregations during the post war years of social and economic upheaval, they were by 1960 experiencing a return to a period of stability and expansion. This was attributed by church leaders to the concerted efforts to adjust to the new environment, and the prosperity of Mennonites generally which facilitated the use of new methods and techniques to advance Mennonitism.

---

124. Canada Month, Dec. 1961, pp. 11,12.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to show how a religious group responded to the challenge of a new environment in its endeavor to preserve its faith.

The Mennonite, like his Anabaptist forebears, was not born and raised in a society where he was free to do as he pleased. His way of life and system of thought was developed in an environment in which there was no religious freedom and no social acceptance. In the first few years of the movement there was active evangelistic work and thousands accepted the faith. Partly for this reason, persecutions began and for three hundred years Mennonites were the object of religious, economic and social restrictions. It was under these conditions that Mennonites acquired customs and standards of values peculiarly their own.

Thus the teachings of Menno Simons on such matters as the church as a fellowship, the believer's purity of life, the authority of the Bible literally interpreted, and the vocation of a "believer", were gradually modified. Under persecution church fellowship developed along the lines of individual responsibilities, brotherhood, and mutual aid,so that these qualities came to stand out more prominently than ever. Similarly under persecution purity of life came to mean separation from the world. Christian virtues continued to receive attention but the sense of isolation from the world was deepened. The first Anabaptist went into the world and won his converts. Persecution forced him into his shell, deepened his sense of exclusion, and suppressed his missionary zeal. Separation

became his protection and his principle. Forced out of populated areas, Mennonites resorted to farming as the only means of survival. In time agrarianism became cemented into the customs and group values of Mennonites. In like manner literal quotation from the Bible provided the best defence against tormentors, and around the authority of the Bible literally interpreted clustered such characteristic principles as love of enemies and non-resistance. The emphasis on simplicity of life led to certain peculiarities of dress and conduct.

It was essentially from this background that the first Mennonites came to the New World in the eighteenth century. They were Mennonites who had had their missionary zeal suppressed and had burned into their souls the need of faithfulness, the spirit of separation, and reverence for the scriptures.

In the American environment there was an entirely new set of conditions. The characteristic quality of the new society which held the greatest promise of working a fundamental change among Mennonites was religious freedom with its concomitant of the possibility of acceptance into society. Persecutions and restrictions which had enhanced the sense of exclusion in the old country were removed. This, however, did not immediately soften the sense of separation owing to the continued isolation caused by the frontier conditions where Mennonites settled. In addition to this there was the barrier of language and the reaction against the unfamiliar. Thus Mennonitism in the traditional form continued for a few more decades.

By the middle of the nineteenth century interesting developments had taken place in America. The frontier had left the coastal regions for points further west. Jacksonian democracy with universal

male suffrage had reinforced the sense of equality in a free society. Public schools were made available for those wishing to take advantage of the provision. The great religious revivals of the early nineteenth century with the new evangelistic movements and the religious societies that accompanied them also helped to complicate the conditions in which Mennonites now found themselves.

Confronted by these new influences some Mennonites, as for instance the Holdemanites, sought to preserve their faith and traditions by migrating to distant points in the American west. Some came to Alberta where block settlements and isolation from an encroaching world were possible. The Old Colony Mennonites of Manitoba also used the escapist approach when they migrated to Mexico in order to get away from the influence of the public educational system and other "worldly intrusions".

Other Mennonites chose rather to accept innovations and displayed an openness to outside influences. Church leaders like Hunsicker and Oberholtzer expressed willingness to assume the social framework of the world despite the fact that it was not ideal. They criticized the existing order but at the same time accepted certain responsibilities for it. This attitude was adopted also by most of the Old Mennonites, Mennonite Brethern in Christ, and General Conference Mennonites who came to Alberta before World War I. They assumed positions of leadership in religious, social and political matters in the different districts in which they settled. In subsequent years these groups very effectively made use of the changes in society to promote their faith.

Of the different groups, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ appeared the most ready to utilize existing conditions to advance their religion. They had imbibed a strong evangelistic emphasis even before coming west. For this reason their church leaders in Alberta urged that at least some of the settlers migrate in smaller groups to predominantly non-Mennonite areas so that they might win others to their faith. It also led to an adjustment to the ways of society around them and an elimination of the peculiarly Mennonite traditions in order that proselytizing might be facilitated. Church leaders made use of methods employed by other denominations in advancing their religion. Alvin Traub, the Canadian Northwest District superintendent for the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, pressed for the founding of a Bible school to train youth for the ministry, and for the removal of the Mennonite name which he contended was an obstacle to evangelistic efforts among non-Mennonites. These objectives were finally accomplished and proved very beneficial.

The Old Mennonites, motivated by a similar desire to preserve their faith, accepted many of the ways of those around them as a means to accomplish this purpose. They used the Sunday School, prayer meetings, Bible camps, youth programs and Bible schools just as some other religious groups had been doing, although they remained somewhat more conservative in dress and displayed a less fervent evangelistic spirit than the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. Despite this element of conservatism, the Old Mennonites ultimately built up a church membership of which fifty per cent were of non-Mennonite background.

Both the Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ

used only English and participated freely in the civic and social affairs of the community. Members of both groups entered business enterprises, fostered education and became active in political affairs. They even managed to get one of their number elected to the provincial legislature. They also cooperated extensively with other denominations, especially during the pioneer days when facilities were often inadequate.

This attitude was evident particularly among the Mennonite settlers of the Didsbury area. Instead of seeking to preserve their religion through isolation from the world, church leaders in the Old Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren in Christ groups advocated adjustment and the use of a dynamic church extension program. This approach was made easier by the fact that the Mennonites were both the first settlers in the district and for some time the dominant religious group. Consequently they assumed the leadership in secular as well as religious matters. When non-Mennonites entered the vicinity they had only the Mennonites to look to for direction in religious affairs. This service Mennonite church leaders were glad to render until the different denominations sent ministers into the community. Thereafter contacts with the various religious bodies were minimized but a cooperative spirit continued. In part this was promoted by the pioneer conditions which confronted all settlers and engendered a sympathetic understanding of the problems of others and a readiness to help those in need. No doubt there existed also the hope, especially among the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, of winning some converts to the Mennonite faith.

The General Conference Mennonites at Didsbury were less open to change than the other two groups. Although they cooperated in the advancement of education, entered business enterprises and participated in politics, they were slow to give up the use of the German language and reluctant to adopt new methods of church extension. These settlers had of course been in Canada for only a few years, having come from Russia to Manitoba during the 1870's. They had also lived in the closed Mennonite community of southern Manitoba. In these matters they stood in contrast to both the Old Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ whose forebears had lived in America for about two centuries and had departed from their exclusiveness long before their westward migration.

The Old Mennonites at Tofield were more conservative than their brethren at Didsbury. When they first entered the area there were already a large number of non-Mennonites in the district. These had established various business enterprises and were supplying the needs of the community with the result that no demand was placed upon the Mennonites to enter the different trades, professions and businesses as was the case at Didsbury. Their conservatism was intensified by the seventy-five Amish families who joined the Old Mennonite congregation in the Tofield area. The seclusiveness was strengthened also by the fact that the Mennonites were able to settle in a bloc of territory east of Tofield vacated by Scandinavians who had pioneered in the district before the turn of the century.

The Holdemanites of the Linden district were more conservative than either the Mennonite Brethren in Christ or the Old Mennonites.

They had in fact broken away from the latter group because of its "liberal" tendencies. Holdeman insisted on a strict discipline, the use of shunning and avoidance, and severe conservatism in dress. Unlike the other groups, the Holdemanites showed no interest in proselytizing and therefore did not have to modify their ways with the intention of winning converts. Their emphasis on separation from the world and the compactness of their colony confirmed them in their practices. Their extreme pietism and the use of only the German language acted as a further barrier between them and the non-Mennonite community. To the Holdemanites seclusion constituted the only guarantee of the continued existence of their religious traditions. It was for this reason that they first came to Alberta where the establishment of a solid Mennonite community and isolation from the "world" appeared possible.

The war and post-war periods gave all these early Mennonite settlers an opportunity to consolidate their economic position. Their agrarian heritage enabled them to withstand economic difficulties more effectively than other inhabitants of the same region. Those of the Didsbury, Carstairs and Linden districts had been the first pioneers in these areas, and had thus been able to claim the best lands. In addition most Mennonite settlers had come west with adequate capital and were not harassed by debts and excessive interest rates. The less fortunate among them benefited from the principle of mutual aid as practised within the brotherhood. Not many farmers experienced a labor shortage because few of their young men joined the armed forces. Economic advancement, therefore, was possible

among Mennonites at a time when others were experiencing financial difficulties, some even being forced to relinquish their possessions and move elsewhere.

Mennonite pacifism aroused considerable antagonism especially where the public associated it with the use of the German language as in the case of the Holdemanites and General Conference Mennonites. In an endeavor to soften this opposition Mennonite groups, with the exception of the Holdemanites, gave generously to the Patriotic Fund, participated in Red Cross activities and rendered valuable assistance in Victory Loan drives. Charitable donations and contributions to foreign relief associations were substantial but were, no doubt, prompted also by the conviction that a Christian ought to help those in need. A few young men including Stauffer, M.L.A., were so sensitive to public pressure that they joined the armed forces. Thus by promoting community objectives as much as possible and by rallying all brethren behind an intensified mutual aid and relief program Mennonites were able to strengthen the bonds within their brotherhood as well as maintain a high degree of public acceptance.

The 1920's ushered in a new era for Canadian Mennonites. The plight of their European brethren under communist oppression placed before Mennonites in Canada, especially the Mennonite Brethren and the General Conference Mennonites, the task of bringing a large number of their co-religionists into Canada. This involved not only the problem of the admittance of these foreigners and paying for the cost of transportation but also getting them established economically, socially and spiritually in a new country. Another problem was that of

the adjustment of these newcomers to their brethren who had lived in Canada for many years. The endeavor to meet successfully these challenges strained relations within the brotherhood for a time but ultimately added strength and unity to Mennonitism much as a period of crisis inspires unity in any group or nation.

The Kanadier Mennonites experienced a number of difficulties in getting the Russländer into Canada. Thousands of soldiers had to be absorbed into civilian life, homestead lands were no longer so readily available, transportation costs were high and economic conditions were depressed. Although prosperity was returning by 1923 and opposition to immigration was weakening, the immigration policy was still quite selective. To gain admittance a person would have to prove to immigration authorities that he had a job waiting for him in Canada or that he was financially able to provide for himself while seeking employment. There was continued opposition to the admittance of racial groups considered difficult to assimilate.

Convincing immigration authorities of the feasibility of bringing in the destitute Russländer was facilitated by the way in which earlier Mennonite immigrants had met their financial obligations and by the assurances given by Canadian Mennonites that none of the immigrants would become a public charge. The desire to allay public apprehension at bringing in foreigners from Soviet Russia accentuated the desire among Mennonites to prove themselves readily assimilable.

Payment of the Reiseschuld (transportation debt) was hampered by a number of developments. Mennonites, both Kanadier and Russländer, spent time, effort and money in locating farms for the immigrants.

Large blocs of land were not readily available with the result that many Russländer settled in totally non-Mennonite districts. This disturbed church leaders and inspired further efforts to strengthen the brotherhood. The influx of the Russländer created the need for more churches and Bible schools. Then, to complicate matters further, the economic depression of the 1930's reduced the need for farm hands at a time when farm income was low. This crowded many landless immigrants into centers like Coaldale where they constituted a financial burden until jobs or land could be secured. The liquidation of the Reiseschuld was thus further delayed. All this served also to increase the contention between the Kanadier and the Russländer on whose behalf the debt had been incurred.

These differences were not finally resolved nor was the Reiseschuld paid until prosperity returned and the second world war created another major crisis and united Mennonites in a common cause. The prospect of bringing more of their brethren from Europe after World War II moved Mennonites to rally behind the debt liquidation program. The belief in mutual aid as a biblical principle and the needs of the refugees in Europe aroused Mennonites to a united effort in providing relief. By these undertakings Mennonitism was substantially strengthened.

The pre-war endeavors at settlement and liquidation of the Reiseschuld were complicated also by the problem of adjustment between the Kanadier and Russländer groups. In many ways the Russländer were more progressive than their Kanadier brethren. Among them were those who, in Russia, had owned factories, managed business enterprises,

owned large estates or had entered various professions. They had long enjoyed a higher standard of living and culture than their Russian neighbors, a status which they had attained through cooperative endeavor. This spirit of cooperation and initiative served a good purpose when they arrived in Canada as penniless refugees. It was, however, not long before they began to assume positions of leadership and authority among their Kanadier brethren. This resulted in the introduction of more progressive measures, and intensified the conviction that adjustment rather than escapism or isolation was the best way to preserve the Mennonite faith. Temporarily Russländer initiative created considerable contention between themselves and their Kanadier brethren. Even on the issue of military service a difference prevailed because through their participation in the Russian Forestry Service and the Selbstschutz (self-defence) many Russländer had weakened in their non-resistant principles. This became abundantly evident in their attempts to evolve some alternative service scheme and in the large number of enlistments in the armed forces. Upon the insistence of the Russländer these veterans were accepted by local congregations as members in good standing despite their violations of the principle of pacifism.

The differences between Russländer and Kanadier were gradually resolved through a number of developments. As already indicated, the efforts exerted in relief activities and the payment of the Reiseschuld, in order to enhance the Mennonite reputation and make possible the immigration of their European brethren, added a sense of unity to the Mennonite brotherhood. Cooperative associations and enterprises, including factories, retail businesses and fire and medical insurance

societies, were initiated by Russländer who had had experience in such matters in Russia. These undertakings proved so successful that the Kanadier brethren soon showed keen interest and became active participants. In a similar manner the private schools and new methods of church extension, which had been introduced largely under the influence of the Russländer, brought encouraging results despite the rapid urbanization following the war, and the materialistic influences of a prosperous society. These successes convinced the Kanadier of the wisdom of following the more progressive policies of the Russländer as a means of preserving the Mennonite faith. When the pro-Germans among the Russländer aroused public antagonism, Mennonite groups exerted every effort to prove to society that their loyalty to the nation was complete and that the Nazi sympathizers constituted only a small radical element which stood in disfavor with the Mennonite community in much the same way as Fascist and Nazi associations lacked public support in Canada generally. These developments plus the prosperity of most Mennonites after the war contributed a vitality and unity of purpose to the brotherhood which was necessary for the advancement of Mennonitism.

Mennonites as a "sect" had long emphasized separation from society, both in its social and religious aspects, although they had never accepted the principle of the community of goods as Hutterites had done. As long as the sense of separation functioned, it was possible to maintain an integrated system in which each point supported every other. The social conditions of the group and the scriptural authority to which the Mennonites appealed worked in conjunction to support one way of life. Under the influence of the new Canadian en-

vironment, however, the support which formerly came from social separation was lost. Under the new conditions individualism, in contrast to the communitarianism of the Hutterites, left every Mennonite substantially to his own resources within a highly competitive society.

With the passing of time, the accumulation of wealth or position, and the softening of outside oppression, ties were formed with the wider community. Acceptance by society was achieved. The Mennonites who had been oppressed by economic and social restrictions welcomed relief and accepted social approval with gratification.

The multiplicity of racial and cultural backgrounds in Canada made it imperative that people learn to agree and live together, to do business together and even to enjoy community activities together. To accomplish this Canadians learned to compromise. This attitude of openness to social influences and contacts was regarded also by most Mennonites as the best way to preserve their faith. It permitted the acceptance of new ideas and practices such as missions, evangelistic meetings, prayer meetings, education, publication and Sunday Schools as well as the use of the English language as a means to promote the Mennonite faith in the face of changing conditions. When the sense of separateness diminished Mennonites began to enter professions and join associations which had long been considered incompatible with the Mennonite tradition. This was the contribution of an urban and industrial society, particularly after World War II.

It is apparent that those Mennonites in Alberta, who have adjusted to the new environment and have used new methods and techniques to advance the Mennonite faith have achieved stability and expansion.

On the other hand those Mennonites, like the Holdemanite and Old Colony groups, who have attempted to escape "worldly" influence through migration and the establishment of closed communities have experienced stagnation and frustration.

The Holdemanites have seen their separateness destroyed through non-Mennonite invasion of their settlements. A few adjustments have been made but generally their unwillingness to accept innovations had left the Holdemanites unprepared for the changes which are pressing in upon them. Consequently, instead of expansion this group is threatened with disintegration in both the Linden and Crooked Creek areas.

The Old Colony group at Fort Vermilion is fortunate in being so far removed from civilization, but even here "foreign" views and practices have made their appearance. Contacts with the outside are increasing and government authorities have succeeded in introducing public education up to the grade X level. A number of non-Mennonites have settled in the area bringing with them ideas and devices foreign to the group. Perhaps the greatest promise for a change in attitude toward society lies in the fact that by 1960 more than one fourth of the farmers in the colony were members of the General Conference Mennonite group having come from Saskatchewan and other parts of Alberta. These had already been well assimilated before they were attracted to the Fort Vermilion area by the availability of good land. Both the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonites have been proselytizing among the Old Colony Mennonites with considerable success among the young people. It appears that unless the "Altkolonier" learn to accept innovations and use them to their advantage they will soon have to migrate again or else suffer disintegration as a group.

APPENDIX A.

Privileges granted by the Canadian Government to prospective Mennonite Immigrants in a Letter by the Secretary of Agriculture dated July 25, 1873.

Source: Department of Agriculture Letters Sent, Vol. 7, 1873, pp. 167-169, in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Ottawa, 25th July 1873

Messrs. David Klaasen
Jacob Peters
Heinrich Wiebe
Cornelius Toews
Menonite, (sic), Delegates from Southern Russia

Gentlemen,

I have the honour under instruction of the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture, to state to you in reply to your letter of this days date, the following facts relating to advantages offered to settlers, and to the immunities afforded to Menonites, (sic), which are established by the Statute law of Canada and by orders of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, for the information of German Mennonites having intention to emigrate to Canada via Hamburg.

1. An entire exemption from any Military service is by law and order in Council granted to the denomination of Christians called Menonites.

2. An order in Council was passed on the 3rd March last to reserve eight townships in the Province of Manitoba for free grants on the condition of settlement as provided in the Dominion Lands Act, that is to say "any person who is the head of a family or has attained the age of 21 years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion Lands for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof."

3. The said reserve of eight Townships is for the exclusive use of the Menonites, and the said free grants of one quarter section, to consist of 160 acres each, as defined by the act.

4. Should the Menonite settlement extend beyond the eight Townships set aside by the Order in Council of March 3rd last other Townships will be in the same way reserved to meet the full requirements of Menonite immigration.

5. If next spring the Menonite settlers on viewing the eight Townships set aside for their use, should prefer to exchange them for any other eight unoccupied Townships, such exchange will be allowed.

6. In addition to the free grant of a ¼ section or 160 acres to every person over 21 years of age on the condition of settlement the right to purchase the remaining ¾ of the section, at $1.00 per acre, is granted by law so as to complete the whole section of 640 acres, which is the largest quantity of land the Government will grant a Patent for to one person.

7. The Settler will receive a Patent for a free grant after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act.

8. In the event of the death of the settler the lawful heirs can claim the Patent for the free grant upon proof that settlement duties for three years have been performed.

9. From the moment of occupation the settler acquires a "homestead right" in the land.

10. The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Menonites without any kind of molestation of restriction whatever; and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.

11. The privilege of affirming instead of making affidavits is afforded by law.

12. The Government of Canada will undertake to furnish Passenger Warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for Menonite families of good character, for the sum of $30.00 per adult person over the age of 8 years, for persons under 8 years half price or $15.00; and for infants under one years $3.00.

13. The Minister specially authorises me to state that this arrangement as to price shall not be changed for the seasons of 1874, 1875 and 1876.

14. I am further to state that if it is changed thereafter, the price shall not up to the year 1882 exceed $40.00 per adult, and children in proportion, subject to the approval of Parliament.

15. The immigrants will be provided with provisions on the portion of the journey between Liverpool and Collingwood; but during other portions of the journey they are to find their own provisions.

John Lowe
Secy. Dept. Agriculture.

APPENDIX B

Copy of appeal, dated October 11, 1917, outlining the position of the Mennonite Church on Military Service.

Source: Goshen College Archives, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

We, the Mennonites of the Ontario Conference, representing also congregations of like faith in the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference and having official representation in the Mennonite General Conference recently assembled at the Yellow Creek Church near Goshen, Indiana, do hereby humbly petition your Government in respect to the faith which we hold dear.

We recognize the good will of the Government in inserting in the Military Service Act a clause granting exemption to all adherents of religious denominations whose articles of faith forbid combatant service, and hereby express our thanks for this gracious consideration, while we also humbly petition that the exemption clause cited may always be so construed as to meet the requirements of the faith and practice of those whom the Government has thus graciously favored, in continuing to them those principles of liberty which have been the occasion of many thanksgivings to God and the constant joy of many humble citizens.

As a people we recognize the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose kingdom "is not of this world". For this reason many of our people in all countries especially the leaders of congregations, have refrained from the use of their suffrage franchise, both for the sake of peace and harmony in the congregation and for the sake of a more complete separation from the entangling affairs of the world, although none are prohibited from the exercise of these privileges. Since the passing of the "War-time Elections Act", we humbly seek to know the position of the Government for all of our members relative to this Act, so that we may conduct ourselves accordingly; realizing that in matters of war we cannot conscientiously give our voice, and in respect to government we are to be submissive to its laws, excepting only the higher laws of the Gospel in all righteousness.

With a deep sense of humility before God, and prayer that the authorities before whom this petition may come may be guided in their decisions and arduous duties by the Divine will, and that we may continue to dwell in godliness and follow the pursuits of peace, we respectfully submit this our petition and shall humbly pray.

Signed by the deputation of the Mennonite Church.

L. J. Burkholder, Moderator, Markham, Ontario;
David Bergey, Secretary, New Dundee, Ontario;
S. F. Coffman, Vineland, Ontario;
Anson Groh, Petrolia, Ontario.

APPENDIX C

Copies of certificates of Church Membership issued as evidence to military authorities.

Source: S. F. Coffman, "Mennonites and Military Service", chapter in L. J. Burkholder's book, History of the Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, Livingstone Press, 1935, pp. 270, 271.

The Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church Certificate

"Have Faith in God."

No.....

This is to certify, that ..... is a member of the ..... Mennonite Church in full fellowship with the congregation worshipping at .....

As a member of the above religious organization, whose creed or principles forbid war or participation therein in any form, he claims exemption from military service.

Signed by the Presiding elder and Minister.

.....

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."
Hebrews 10:23.

The Old Mennonites

Certificate for Members

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that ..... whose signature appears below, is a member of the ....., and was a member prior to October 12, 1917. He is exempted from all forms of military service.

Bearer, ...

Minister, ...

Deacon, ...

..... Registrar

Dated at ....., ... 1917.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

Bachman, C. G., The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Norristown, Pa., Pennsylvania German Society, 1942.

Bainton, R. H., The Reformation of the 16th Century, Boston, Beacon Press, 1952.

Bestor, A. E. Jr., Backwoods Utopias, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950.

Billington, Ray A. and Hedges, J. B., Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1960.

Burkholder, L. J., A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario, Toronto, Livingstone Press Ltd., 1935.

Climanhaga, A. W., History of the Brethren in Christ Church, Nappanee, Indiana, E. V. Publishing House, 1942.

Corbett, David C., Canada's Immigration Policy: A Critique, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1957.

Cresswell, H. C. P., The Canadian Pacific and Immigration, Montreal, Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Department of Immigration and Colonization, 1954.

Cruikshank, E. A., A Century of Municipal History, County of Welland, 1792-1892, Welland, Ont., Tribune Print, u.d.

Dafoe, John W., Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Time, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1931.

Dawson, C. A., Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, Vol. VII, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1936.

Die Mennoniten-Gemeinde in Russland während der Kriegsund Revolutionsjahre, 1914-1920, Kommissions-Verlag der Mennonitischen Flüchtlingsfürsorge, Scottdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1921.

Dunham, Mabel, Toward Sodom, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1927.

Dunham, Mabel, The Trail of the Conestoga, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1924.

Eckardt, Hans von, Russia, revised and supplemented by the author for the English edition, translated from German by Catherine Phillips, New York, Knopf, 1933.

Ehrt, Adolf, Das Mennonitentum in Russland: Von Seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart, Langensalza-Berlin-Leipzig, Julius Beltz, 1932.

Epp, D. H., Die Chortitzer Mennoniten, Odessa, Odessaer Zeitung, 1889.

Fast, Gerhard, Im Schatten des Todes, Winnipeg, Christian Press, 1956.

Fretz, J. W., Meditations on Christian Mutual Aid, Bluffton, Ohio, published by the Association of Mennonite Aid Societies, u.d.

Friesen P. M. Die Alt-evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der Mennonitischen Gesamtgeschiste, Halbstadt, Roduga Printing, 1911.

Gingerich, M., Service for Peace, Scottdale, Pa, Herald Press, 1949.

Guillet, E. C., Pioneer Life in the County of York, Toronto, Hess-Trade Typesetting Co., 1946.

Harcave, Sidney, Russia: A History, New York, J. B. Lippincolt, 1959

Harper, R., The Early History of Haldimand County, Caledonia, Ont., Harrison and Arrell Martindale publishers, 1950.

Hedges, J. B., Building the Canadian West: The Land and Colonization Policies of the Canadian Pacific Railway, New York, The Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1939.

Hiebert, P. C., Feeding the Hungry, Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1929.

Hildebrand, J. J., Aus der Vorgeschichte der Einwanderung der Mennoniten aus Russland nach Manitoba,N. Kildonan, Winnipeg, J. Regehr, 1949.

Hildebrand, J. J., Chronologische Zeittafel, N. Kildonan, J. Regehr, 1945.

Horsch, John, Menno Simons, His Life, Labors and Teachings, Scottdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1916.

Huffman, J. A., History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, Bethel Publishing Co. 1920.

Hyma, Albert, Renaissance and Reformation, Grand Rapids, Eerdman Publishing Co., 1951.

Kirkconnell, W., Canada, Europe and Hitler, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1939.

Krahn, Cornelius, (ed.) From the Steppes to the Prairies, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Publication Office, 1949.

Krehbiel, J. P. The History of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, Canton, Ohio, Author, 1898.

Lehman, M. C., The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction, Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1945.

Lohrenz, Gerhard, Sagradowka, Rosthern, Sask., Echo-Verlag, 1947.

Lohrenz, John H., The Mennonite Brethren Church, Hillsboro, Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1950.

Mackintosh, W. A., Prairie Settlement: The Geographical Setting, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, I, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd, 1934.

Mann, W. E., Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1955.

Martin, Chester and Morton, A. S., History of Prairie Settlement and Dominion Lands Policy, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement, II, Toronto, The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 1938.

Mavor, James, Economic History of Russia, London, Dent, 1926.

Mennonite Encyclopedia, The, Editors C. H. Smith and H. S. Bender, Scottdale, Pa., The Mennonite Publishing House, 1955.

Mitchell, John, The Settlement of York County, Toronto, The Municipal Corporation of the County of York, 1952.

Nelles, R. B., County of Haldimand in the days of Auld Lang Syne, Port Hope, Ont., The Hamly Press Book Printers, 1905.

Penner, John M., A Concise History of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Hesston, Kansas, The Publication Board of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1953.

Quiring, W., Mennonites in Canada: The Pictorial Record, Altona, Manitoba, D. W. Friesen and Sons, Ltd., 1961.

Reimer, G. E. and Gaeddert, G. R., Exiled by the Czar, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Publication Office, 1956.

Schafer, P. J., Die Mennoniten in Canada, Altona, Man., D. W. Friesen and Sons, Ltd., 1947.

Schreiber, W. I., The Fate of the Prussian Mennonite, Göttingen, Mennonite Research Center, 1955.

Simons, Menno, The Complete Works of, Elkhart, Indiana, John F. Funk and Brother, 1871. 2 volumes.

Smith, C. H., The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century, Norristown, Pa., Pennsylvania German Society, 1929.

Smith, C. H., The Story of the Mennonites, Newton, Kansas, Mennonite Publication Office, 1957.

Smith, Preserved, The Age of the Reformation, New York, Holt, 1920.

Smith, W. L., The Pioneers of Old Ontario, Toronto, George N. Morang, 1923.

Storms, E. R., History of the United Missionary Church, Elkhart, Indiana, Bethel Publishing Co., 1958.

Thomas, L. G., The Liberal Party in Alberta, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1959.

Toews, T. A., Alternative Service in Canada during W. W. II, Winnipeg, The Christian Press, 1959.

Toews, T. A., Ergahrungen der Mennoniten in Canada 1939-45, Steinbach, A. B. Dyck Publishers, 1947.

Turner Thesis, The, Boston, D. C. Heath and Coy., 1956.

Unruh, B. H., Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18 und 19 Jahrhundert, Karlsruhe, Heinrich Schneider, Karlstrasse 28, 1955.

Unruh, J. D., In the Name of Christ, Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1952.

Weber, H. F., Centennial History of Mennonites of Illinois, Goshen, Indiana, Goshen College Press, 1931.

Weber, M., Such was Life, Calgary, The Times Press Limited, 1956.

Wenger, J. C., Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1949.

2. GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Orders-in-Council, available at the Public Archives, Ottawa.
April 26, 1872; March 3, 1873; June 2, 1923; May 1, 1943; May 28, 1946; January 30, 1947.

Debates of the House of Commons, Canada, Sessions of 1875; 1907; 1909; 1917; 1919; 1947.

Journals of the House of Commons, Canada, Sessions of 1876; App. 8; 1878, App. 2; 1879, App. 1 & 3.

Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1890, No. 6; 1892, No. 7; 1893, No. 13; 1894, No. 13; 1896, No. 13; 1897, No. 13; 1898, No. 13; 1899, No. 13; 1900, No. 13; 1901, No. 25; 1904, No. 25; 1905, No. 25; 1906, No. 25; 1908, No. 25; 1909, No. 25; 1911, No. 25; 1913, No. 25; 1914, No. 25.

Canada, Sessional Papers, 1874, Reports of the Immigration Agents, Vol. 6.

Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, I, 1906, (Edmonton, 1907).

Statutes of Alberta, 1909, Cap. 23; 1913, Cap. 13; 1913, Cap. 19.

Canada, Report of the Royal Standing Commission on Dominion Provincial Relations, 1867-1939, Ottawa, 1940.

Canada, Report of the Select Standing Committee on Immigration and Colonization of the House of Commons, 1886.

Report on Mennonite Colonies, by Henry C. Jacobson, Dominion Government Intelligence Officer, to the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, Sep. 9, 1889.

Alberta, N.W.T., Report of Six Years Experience of a Farmer in the Red Deer District, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture, 1890

Report of the Minister of Agriculture for Dominion of Canada, 1891, Sessional Paper 7, 1892, p. 220.

Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1920 and 1921. Legislative Library, Edmonton, Alberta.

Report on Rural Life due to Drought Conditions and Crop Failures, 1930-1937, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture, 1939.

Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba, by J. Y. Shantz, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture, 1873.

Letter to Mennonite delegates from Southern Russia from John Lowe, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, 25th July, 1873, Ottawa, Department of Agriculture letters sent, Vol. 7, 1873, pp. 167-169, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1905; 1913; 1914; 1915; 1916; 1918; 1920; 1922; 1923; 1925; 1926; 1927; 1929; 1930; 1932.

Canada Year Books

The Canada Gazettes

Guidance Bulletin, Edmonton, Alberta, Department of Education, January, 1952.

Research for Guidance, Edmonton, Alberta, Department of Education, October, 1952.

Survey of Didsbury, prepared by the Industrial Development Branch, Department of Economic Affairs, Government of the Province of Alberta, August, 1959.

3. MENNONITE YEARBOOKS, REPORTS, MINUTES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

Protokoll der Delegierten versammlung fur Manitoba in Winkler am 23-25 Juni, 1931, Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Protokoll der Delegierten versammlung fur Saskatchewan am 29-30 Juni, 1932, in Drake, Saskatchewan, Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Protokoll der erweiterten Komitteesitzung der Z.M.I.K.am 6 u. 7. Juli, 1932, Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Protokoll der 14 Jahresversammlung der Organisation der Mennoniten in Saskatchewan, abgehelten in Swift Current am 8 und 9 Juli, 1943, Swift Current Bible Institute, Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Protokoll der Versammlung der Mennoniten Gruppe bei Coaldale; Nov. 11, Dec. 30, 1927; Dec. 22, 1928; Apr. 5, 1932; Dec. 29, 1932; Oct. 1, 1933; Sep. 24, 1934; Nov. 18, 1935; Jan. 11, 1936; Feb. 13, 1936; Jul. 26, 1937;Jan. 9, 1942. In the possession of B.B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta.

Protokoll der Vertreterversammlung der Mennonitischen Siedler Alberta's; 1928; 1930; 1931; 1932; 1933; 1934; 1935; 1936; 1937; 1938; 1940; 1941; 1942; 1943; 1944; 1946. B. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta.

Protokoll des Brandaeltesten, Aug. 10, 1943. B. B. Janz, Coaldale.

Minutes of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference, Didsbury, 1919; Library of the Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

Documents in the possession of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, (now the Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council), 506 4th Ave., N., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Documents in the possession of the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.

Letter to John F. Funk's wife, June 27, 1873, Mennonite Archives, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Meyers, Earl, "Mennonite Radio Broadcasting, 1936-1951", Mennonite Archives, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Traub, Alvin, "Address to the 1952 graduating class of Mountain View

Bible College, Didsbury", Library of Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

Traub, A. "Manuscript on the early history of the Canadian Northwest District" written for a ministerial convention, 1954, Library of Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

Weber, M. "Manuscript on the Didsbury Settlement", Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society, 1950.

Gedenk-und Dankfeier des 25 jaehrigen Bestehens der Coaldale Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde, May 27, 1951. A report of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church.

Conference Reports from 1896 to 1950, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, cumulative, Hesston, Kansas, Publication Board of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1953.

Yearbooks

General Conference Mennonites: Jahrbuch der Konferenz der Mennoniten in Canada, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1956, 1960, published by Der Bote, Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

Mennonite Brethren: Yearbook of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1924, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1955, 1956, 1960, published by Christian Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mennonite Brethren in Christ Yearbook, 1922.

E. D. Zook, ed. The Mennonite Yearbook and Directory, 1959, Scottdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House.

A Directory of Mennonite Insurance and Mutual Aid Organizations, Mennonite Research Foundation, Goshen, Indiana, 1956.

Jahrbuch der 29ten Konferenz der Mennonitengemeinden in Alberta, 1958, published by Niagara Press, Virgil, Ontario.

4. ARTICLES FROM PERIODICALS, NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER SOURCES

Arcand, Adrien, "Does Canada Need Fascism?" Country Guide, July, 1938, pp. 11, 44.

Baskerville, David, "Best of Citizens", Witness and Canadian Homestead, Jan. 22, 1930.

Braun, Peter, "Educational system of the Mennonite colonies in S. Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1929, pp. 168-182.

Breithaupt, W. H., "The Settlements of Waterloo County" Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, XXII, 1925.

Buchanan, Donald, "Mormons in Canada", Canadian Geographical Journal, Apr., 1931, pp. 255-270.

Burkholder, L. J. "The Early Mennonite Settlement in Ontario", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1934, pp. 103-122.

Claszen, J. P., "Grundfrage der Jugendvereinsarbeit", Der Bote, Mar. 19, 1930, p. 1; Mar. 26, 1930, pp. 1,2.

Colley, J., "Company Colonization Activities aid Settlement of the Dominion", Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Mar. 1, 1940, p. 6.

Correll, E. H. "Mennonite Immigration into Manitoba: Sources and Documents, 1873-74", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1937, pp. 267-283; Jan., 1948, pp. 43-57.

Correll, E. H., "President Grant and the Mennonite Immigration from Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1935, pp. 144-152.

Cressman, J. B., "History of the First Mennonite Church of Kitchener, Ontario", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1939, p. 15.

Cross, A. F., "Heiling Hitler on Saskatchewan Relief", Ottawa Evening Citizen, Nov. 27, 1940.

De Fehr, C. A., "Greuel Propaganda im Ausland", Der Bote, Apr. 26, 1933, p. 3

De Fehr, C. A., "Unsere Winnipeger", Der Bote, Feb. 13, 1935, p. 5.

Deutsches General-Konsulat, "Uber die Erfassung der wehrflichtigen Staats angehörigen und uber die Einstellung von Freiwilligen", Der Bote, June 14, 1939, p. 6.

"Die Deutsche Frau Raucht nicht", Der Bote, June 21, 1933, p. 4

Edwards, F., "Fascism in Canada", Maclean's Magazine, Apr. 15, 1938, p. 10.

Enns, D. P., "Die Mennonitischen Schulen in Russland", Mennonite Yearbook, 1950, p. 10.

Epp, D. H., "Das Zentrale Mennonitische Immigranten Komitee", Der Bote, July 21, 1948, p. 3; July 28, 1948, p. 2.

Epp, Frank H., "Radio as it should be", Mennonite Life, Jan., 1959, pp. 15-21.

Epp, J. B., "Und es wird gepredigt werden in aller welt ..." Der Bote, Mar. 21, 1934, p.1.

Epp, T., "Durfen Kinder Gottes sich am Kriege beteiligen?", Der Bote, July 28, 1937, p. 4; Nov. 24, 1937, p. 2;

Esau, D. P., "Was erwarten unsere Gemeinden von den Elementarund Hochschulen in Religion und Deutsch", Der Bote, June 15, 1938, pp. 1,2.

Fast, A. J., "Unterstirtzt die deutschen Lehranstalten", Der Bote, Feb. 4, 1931, p. 3;

Fast, A. J., "Wasgeht in Deutschland vor?" Der Bote, May 10, 1933, p. 5; May 24, 1933, p. 6.

Fast, Gerhard, "Mennonites in the Ukraine under Stalin and Hitler", Mennonite Life, April, 1947, p. 18.

Francis, E. K., "A Bibliography on the Mennonites of Manitoba", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1953, pp. 237-247.

Francis, E. K., "The Adjustment of a Peasant Group to a Capitalistic Economy: the Manitoba Mennonites", Rural Sociology, 17, 1952, pp. 218-228.

Francis, E. K., "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1951, p. 202.

Francis, E. K., "The Mennonite School Problem in Manitoba, 1874-1919", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1953, pp. 204-236.

Fretz, Dr. J. W., "Farming our Heritage", Mennonite Life, Apr., 1949, p. 3.

Fretz, Dr. J. W., "The Renaissance of a Rural Community", Mennonite Life, Jan., 1946, pp. 14-17, 39.

Friesen, C. H., "Haltet an der Muttersprache und wenns umden Dialekt ist", Der Bote, Oct. 10, 1934, p. 2.

Getz, Jane C. "The Economic Organization and Practices of the Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pa.," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Jan., 1946, p. 31; Apr., 1946, p. 93.

Gingerich, Melvin, "Jacob Y. Shantz, 1822-1909, Promoter of the Mennonite Settlements in Manitoba", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1950, pp. 230-247.

Grant, Gordon M. "Here are Industry's steps to add D.P.'s to Labor Force", The Financial Post, Feb. 14, 1948.

Haslam, J. H., "Why Settlers Leave", Grain Growers' Guide, Aug. 30, 1916, pp. 19,20.

Hege, G. "Wie ich Deutschland wiedersah", Der Bote, Mar. 13, 1935, p.2.

Hildebrand, J. J., "Not-wendige Warnung", Der Bote, Apr. 4, 1934, p.2.

Hofer, J. M., (ed.) "Diary of Paul Tschetter, 1873", Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1931, pp. 112-128; Oct., 1931, pp. 198-219.

Horsch, John "Prominent Co-Workers of Menno Simons", Christian Monitor, March, 1940.

Horsch, John, "Wehrlosigkeit und Feld prodiger Dienst", Der Bote, Oct. 26, 1938, p. 2.

Janz, B.B., "Bin ich Nationalsozialist? Bewahre!", Der Bote, Jan. 11, 1939, p. 1.

Janz, B. B., "Komt Menno Simons unter die Nationalsozialisten?", Der Bote, Dec. 26, 1934, p. 1.

Janzen, J. H., "Deutsches", Der Bote, Mar. 15, 1939, pp. 1,2.

Janzen, J. H., "Information", Der Bote, Apr. 25, 1934, pp. 5,6.

Kaufman, R. C., "Salvation by Science?", Mennonite Life, Oct., 1948, p. 35.

Kirkconnell, Watson, "The European-Canadians in their Press", Canadian Historical Society Report, 1940, p. 91.

Klassen, C. F., "Der Wegderpraktischen Hilfe", Der Bote, Feb. 18, 1931, p. 3.

Klassen, C. F., "Gegen die geislose Judenhetze" Der Bote, Apr. 19, 1933, p. 2

Klassen, C. F., "The Mennonites of Russia, 1917-1928", Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1932, pp. 69-80.

Koop, A., "Bericht von Springridge und Glenwood", Der Bote, Mar. 1, 1933, p. 6.

Krahn, Dr. Cornelius, "Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites of Russia", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1935, pp. 165-177.

Krahn, Dr. Cornelius, "The Ethnic Origin of the Mennonites from Russia", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, pp. 45-48.

Kroeker, A. "Buchertisch", Der Bote, Sep. 25, 1935, p. 6.

Kroeker, A. "Waffen der Gerechtigkeit", Der Bote, Mar. 15, 1939, p.1.

Kühler, W. J., "Dutch Mennonite Relief Work in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1943, pp. 87-94.

Kuhn, Walter, "Cultural Achievement of the Chortitza Mennonites", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, pp. 35-38.

Laut, Agnes C. "The Last Trek to the Last Frontier", Century Magazine, May, 1909, pp. 99-112.

Leibbrandt, G., "The Emigration of the German Mennonite from Russia to the U.S. and Canada in 1873-1880", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1932, pp. 205-226; Jan., 1933, pp. 5-41.

Mackintosh, W. A. "Some Aspects of a Pioneer economy", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, Nov., 1936, p. 460.

Müller, Lydia, "Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnten", Quellen und Forshungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, Leipzig, 1938.

Murphy, George B. "Western Mennonites plan practical help for Europe", Family Herald and Weekly Star, u.d.

Neufeld, N. J., "Alskanada Deutscher in Deutschland", Der Bote, Feb. 12, 1936, pp. 2,3.

Nielson, D. W., "In Defence of Mennonites", Ottawa Evening Citizen Nov. 29, 1940.

Pannabecker, S. F.,"John H. Oberholtzer and his time", Mennonite Life, June, 1947, p. 39.

Peters, Frank C., "Non-Combatant Service Then and Now", Mennonite Life, Jan., 1955, p. 31

Porter, S. G., "The Canadian Pacific Land Grants and their Administration", Canadian Pacific Staff Bulletin, Feb. 1, 1940, p. 1.

Quiring W., "Der Deutche Gruss", Der Bote, Oct. 24, 1934, p. 2.

Regehr, I. I., "Die Vertreterversammlung in Alberta", Der Bote, Sep. 18, 1935, p. 5.

Reimer, A., "Gegen die geistlose Judenhetze", Der Bote, Apr. 26, 1933, pp. 2,3.

Rempel, D. D. "From Russia to Canada Twenty-Five Years Ago", Mennonite Life, July, 1948, p. 42.

Rempel, Dr. D. G., "The Mennonite Migration to New Russia, (1787-1870)", Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1935, pp. 71-91; July, 1935, pp. 109-128.

Rempel, J. G., "Friedens bestre-bungen", Der Bote, Sep.28, 1938,p.4.

Rempel, J. G., "Mennonites on the Air in Western Canada", Mennonite Life, July, 1952, pp. 125-127.

Rempel, W. "Die Mennoniten in Süd-Manitoba", Bundesbote Kalender, 1898

Roberts, Leslie, "Will Quebec Turn Right", Canadian Magazine, Apr., 1939, pp. 8, 9, 45.

Schnell, Kempes, "John F. Funk's Land Inspection Trip as recorded in his diaries, 1872-1873", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Oct., 1950, pp. 295-311.

Seelheim, H., "Aufruf zum deutschen Winterhilfswerk", Der Bote, Dec. 18, 1935, pp. 1,5.

Seelheim, H., "Bekanntmachung", Der Bote, Mar. 18, 1936, p. 5.

Sharp, Mitchell W., "Allied Wheat Buying in Relationship to Canadian Marketing Policy, 1914-1918", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, Aug., 1940, p. 372.

Shelley, A. R., "Mennonites on the Air", Mennonite Life, April, 1952, pp. 65-71.

Sissons, C. B., "The Mennonites of Western Canada", The New Outlook, Mar. 7, 1928.

Sissons, C. B., "Trek of Mennonites had its Tragic Aspects", Free Press Prairie Farmer, Nov. 16, 1921.

Sudermann, Jacob, "Origin of the Mennonite State Service in Russia, 1870-1880", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Jan., 1943, pp. 23-46.

Thiessen, Jakob, "Wir Mennoniten", Der Bote, Apr. 12, 1933, pp. 2,3.

Thiessen, J. J., "Zur Herüberbringung unserer Flüchtlinge aus Europe", Der Bote, Mar. 22, 1933, p. 2.

Toews, Jacob, "Mennonitischer Deutscher order Deutscher Mennonit?" Der Bote, Mar. 4, 1936, p. 3.

Toews, G., "Ich wunsche zu dieser Angelegenheit die Tat", Der Bote, Feb. 17, 1937, pp. 2,3.

Toews, G., "Was ein Laie so aus dem politischen Teich Fischt", Der Bote, Dec. 19, 1934, p. 4.

Willms, P. D., "Unsere Problems", Der Bote, Jan. 31, 1934, pp. 1,2.

Zacharies, Isaac, "Zur Reiseschuld", Der Bote, Mar. 22, 1933, p. 2.

Items used from:-

Calgary Daily Herald
Canada Month
Canadian Mennonite
Carstairs News
Der Courier
Der Nordwestern
Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada
Didsbury Pioneer
Edmonton Bulletin
Edmonton Journal
Gospel Banner
Grain Growers' Guide
Grande Prairie Herald Tribune
Lethbridge Herald
Manitoba Free Press
Mennonitische Rundschau
Morning Albertan
Morning Leader, Regina
Regina Star
Saskatoon Star Phoenix
Strathmore Standard
Tofield Standard
Winnipeg Tribune

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Eddie Boese, Linden, Alberta

John T. Esau, Crooked Creek, Alberta.

J. B. Francis, Tofield, Alberta.

T. Giles, Superintendent of Schools, Ft. Vermilion, Alberta.

Mr. Hanselmann, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, one-time chairman of the committee for Germanism in his area; in possession of some copies of Deutsche Zeitung fuer Canada.

Rev. John Neufeld, Tofield, Alberta

Bishop J. B. Stauffer, Tofield, Alberta.

Mr. R. G. Stevens, Didsbury, Alberta.

P. I. Thiessen, Crooked Creek, Alberta.

Rev. A. Traub, Mountain View Bible College, Didsbury, Alberta.

Rev. P. J. Warkentin, Tofield, Alberta.

Dominion Archivist, Ottawa, Ontario.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, Ontario.

Goshen College Archives, Goshen, Indiana.

Legislative Library, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Legislative Library, Toronto, Ontario.

Provincial Bureau of Statistics, Edmonton, Alberta.

University of Saskatchewan, Murray Library, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Information was obtained from many persons who prefer to remain anonymous.

6. INTERVIEWS

Miss Helen Brown, Didsbury, Alberta.

Rev. Hans Dyck, Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Mrs. J. B. Francis, Librarian, Tofield, Alberta.

Mr. J. Friesen, Hague, Saskatchewan.

Johann Funk, Ft. Vermilion, Alberta.

J. Gerbrandt, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

B. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta.

J. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta.

Miss Sara Lehn, Ft. Vermilion, Alberta.

Rev. D. P. Neufeld, Rosemary, Alberta.

Rev. D. J. Pankratz, Coaldale, Alberta.

Several other persons were interviewed but these prefer to remain anonymous.

University of Alberta Library
0 1620 1066 9461
B29818